



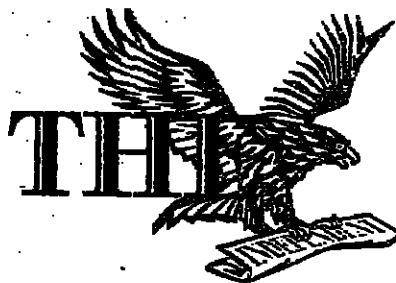
Magazine

The old devils
Tales of old men with young
wives and new children

Weekend

Weekend

The egg snatchers
One man's battle to protect the
nests of Britain's rare birds



THE INDEPENDENT

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'Britain is slowly changing hands'



ANDREW MARR

In politics, talk of turning-points is a dangerous game, but during the past 48 hours the prospects for a Conservative election victory seem to have slipped from being merely unlikely to being barely thinkable. The Tories' hopes for a dramatic late revival seem desperately thin.

Their strategists like to say that as soon as the public believes the Conservatives can win the next election, then they can win the next election. The trouble is, the public don't, and are now likely to stay sceptical. John Major grins gamely on, almost heroic in his personal optimism. But in weeks like these he seems reminiscent of *Private Eye's* famously disastrous football manager, "The ash-faced Ron Kneec", while Tony Blair whooshes round America, playing Virtual Government.

The Staffordshire by-election doesn't, of itself, prove anything. By-elections are more like opinion polls than like general elections. They confront voters with a different question - not "which government do you choose?" but rather, "how cross are you feeling with the powers that be this morning?"

Kicking governments is thoroughly enjoyable. But a fundamentally different thing from picking them - the Tories won back every seat that they had lost this year between 1987 and 1992. But politics progresses by stories. Before Tamworth, the Tories were preparing a story about their regeneration in 1996 that will now have to be postponed.

They had been desperately



New friends: Tony Blair and President Bill Clinton in the Oval Office yesterday

Photograph: Gregg Newton/Reuters

hoping for a by-election result good enough to be presented as some kind of turning point. And then this - a slap across the chops, a kick in the bottom, a stinging rebuke.

Tory by-election defeats have become almost routine, but this weekend it feels as if Britain is slowly changing hands. Nor should sensible Tories take any pleasure in the shrinking of the Liberal Democrat vote. That too is a warning. If voters' readiness to switch tactically is passed on from by-elections to general elections, then the Government is looking at a much more serious defeat next year than ministers currently expect.

Next year? Yes - as long as the Ulster Unionists don't lose patience with Major, his administration can still survive into 1997. There will be further bad nights, particularly after the local elections. The story of the past few years has been one of political decay and I therefore predict more unpredictable events - another defection, a damaging resignation, an unexpected parliamentary defeat. But these have become almost routine: an early election would need the withdrawal of unionist backing on a confidence motion, or the collapse of the Government from within, and neither seems likely.

But the Tories' one-vote majority will further diminish the party's ability to shape events. In most important ways, this has become a government condemned to passivity.

Provocative legislation cannot be passed. The European Inter-Governmental Conference is a long, slow game of blocking and kicking into touch. The great economic recovery has become the Conservatives' *Gordian*.

While in office, ministers are able to do relatively little with their formal power, in opposition Tony Blair manages to seem impressively busy for a man with no money to spend. The other half of this week's story

has been his remarkably life-like impersonation of a successful, old-time Conservative prime minister. Once, such people were easy to recognise. We know them by their friends - the American presidents, the directors of international capital, the media tycoons. We knew them by their calm assumption of the moral leadership of the middle classes. We knew them by their ruthless professionalism of their political organisation. And we knew them above all because they claimed almost to be above politics, standing for the nation against the scheming of political extremists - in the

TURN TO PAGE 2

Major urged to move right

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

John Major yesterday came under pressure to move to the right to meet the challenge of Tony Blair's march on to the centre ground of British politics.

In the wake of Labour's crushing victory in Thursday's Staffordshire South East by-election, John Redwood, who challenged the Prime Minister for the Tory leadership last year, led Tory claims that the defeat required a change of direction, marked by big tax cuts.

But Mr Major insisted he would hold to a steady course: "I have been in politics long enough not to over-react to any by-election result. I am disappointed by last night's result but politics is not an easy ride. I am here to do what is right and stick with it."

Labour's Brian Jenkins took the seat with a near-record 22 per cent swing, reducing Mr Major's Commons majority to one. Speaking from the United States before a meeting with President Clinton, Mr Blair put the Conservatives on notice: "If an opportunity presents itself to remove this Government then it's not merely an opportunity, it is our duty as the Opposition to try and remove them," he said.

The Labour leader welcomed the result as a "stunning" vindication of his 'ave-of-pol' declaration that Labour was now the party of the centre, as well as the left of centre. He said: "I think one of the things that last night's result shows is that New Labour is a new party of the centre ground, is a party that can

appeal across the classes and is a party that is capable therefore of uniting the country."

And the success of Labour's middle-class message in a classically Middle England seat reignited the Tory party's divisions over how to fight back against Mr Blair's appeal to their former supporters.

As Tory MPs privately expressed alarm that the Government might be running out of time to stage a recovery, several urged the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, to adopt a bold tax-cutting strategy.

Mr Redwood said: "I think voters in the by-election were saying the economic recovery is not enough, they want to see more action on tax... they want reassurance about the future direction of the country."

But the "One Nation" Tory Tim Devlin, MP for Stockton South, insisted the party had to fight for the centre ground. "Anyone who's ever fought a marginal seat knows that you win in the centre ground and that it is the attractiveness of your policies to the broad mass of the public, not just to your own traditional supporters, which is what counts," he said.

The deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine insisted that the Tories' second-worst by-election defeat by Labour did not mean a change to the strategy of waiting for "real personal disposable income" to rise. "The longer we have, the more the benefits of the sacrifices that we've made turn out into economic prosperity for the widest possible range of people," he said.

By-election result, page 2

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Slaughtered cattle to be pulped and buried

PAUL FIELD

Slaughterhouses will destroy up to 30,000 cattle a week in the proposed BSE cull with the beasts being dismembered to remove possible infected parts and the rest of the carcasses ground to a pulp and buried in landfill sites.

Under government plans, abattoirs must remove the head, spinal cord, intestines and spleen from the animal for incineration. The rest of the carcass, not considered to be at risk of BSE, would be reduced to a form of extremely fine mince-meat by rendering plants and buried. The procedures are a means of getting around the chronic shortage of incineration facilities.

European agriculture officials talked late into the night to reach an agreement on the logistics of the disposal of older cows. The destruction could begin within a few weeks following the meeting of the beef management committee in Brussels. Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, said "All UK beef on sale will continue to be from cattle under 30 months. Significant EU funds will be available to compensate farmers for the destruction of their older cattle."

The 30,000-a-week figure is double the number thought necessary under the Luxembourg agreement last week to keep all cattle older than 30

months out of the food chain.

For around three months the Government will not be able to limit the destruction to 15,000 normally slaughtered every week at the end of their productive life owing to the backlog of up to 100,000 old cows and a further 100,000 younger animals more than 30 months old awaiting slaughter on farms.

A spokeswoman for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food confirmed the details of the proposals placed on the negotiating table in Brussels. She stressed that the only carcasses to be entirely incinerated would be confirmed or suspected BSE cases.

The nine incineration plants licensed to destroy cattle can cope with 3,000 carcasses a week.

However, officials were tight-lipped on the compensation package being considered.

Renderers, which specialise in processing animal waste, have already been told they are to receive £112m a year to make up for the loss of business in bonemeal for animal feed and beef products such as gelatin. Slaughter houses have been offered a £53m package, which accounts for the charges levied by the Meat Hygiene Service for inspections every year.

But the abattoirs want compensation for unsaleable stocks worth more than £70m, at present in store as a result of the



Douglas Hogg: Thirty-month culling proposal to go ahead

collapse in the UK beef market. It is thought that up to 85,000 tons of beef are in abattoir chillers, bonded warehouses at ports or in store on ships at sea.

Peter Scott, director of the Federation of Fresh Meat Wholesalers, representing 85 per cent of 450 slaughter houses in Britain, said that without compensation the majority will go under.

The federation has accepted the need for a rationalisation of the industry under which abattoirs and meat processing plants would be paid to go out of business, a move supported by the Meat and Livestock Commission.

Meanwhile the federation yesterday said it would reject a European offer to buy up thou-

sands of tonnes of unwanted beef. The NFU called the lack of UK interest in the offer astonishing and disappointing. Other European countries are selling thousands of tonnes of beef into storage.

The federation claimed it made no sense to take top-quality beef out of the system at this time. UK meat traders are selling into storage just 140 tonnes of unwanted beef because of the BSE crisis. The price agreed with the EU's beef management committee was £220 per 100 kilos. Other countries jumped at the chance to guarantee a return on their beef in the midst of consumer doubts rather than take a gamble on a market upturn. France sold nearly 2,500 tonnes of beef while Germany is handling over more than 4,000 tonnes.

The decision marked the opening of the European beef stores for the first time in two years in the wake of the BSE scare. But the fact that so few British traders took up the offer suggests they still have confidence in prices and are hanging on.

Mr Scott said with more than half the beef supplies possibly being taken out of the system, the country will be short of beef. "Therefore it makes no sense at all to start taking the best quality beef away from the housewife and putting it into deep-freeze. It is not a boycott, it is simply not attractive."

Israel pounds new targets in Lebanon

ROBERT FISK
Beirut

Israel's blitz on Lebanon began to turn into an international crisis last night after helicopters marauding over Beirut's southern suburbs opened fire on a Syrian anti-aircraft battery, killing a Syrian major and wounding eight of his men. The incident is likely to have grave repercussions on the crumbling Middle East peace negotiations.

Even as the Israelis were bombing the capital, up to 50,000 Lebanese refugees - fleeing from their homes after a warning by Israel that their villages would be assaulted in the hunt for Hizbollah fighters - streamed towards Beirut.

Earlier in the day, Hizbollah guerrillas retaliated for Thursday's Israeli raids by launching more than 24 Katyusha rockets at northern Galilee, wounding five Israeli civilians at Kiryat Shmona: one of them, a woman, was critically injured when a missile exploded beside her car. Within hours, the Israelis took their own counter-retaliation by shelling the village of Yohmor

in the lower Bekaa Valley, killing four Lebanese civilians and wounding eight others, including two girls aged 10 and 11. Another eight wounded civilians hit by Israeli shellfire were brought to hospitals in Tyre.

In southern Lebanon, Israeli troops were reported to be preparing for a parachute drop onto the semi-abandoned villages north of their occupation zone where hundreds of Hizbollah guerrillas - the only Lebanese who were not known to have suffered any casualties yesterday - lay in hiding in the hilltop hamlets, waiting for Israeli troops to arrive if an airborne attack materialised.

In a grim warning earlier in the day, the Hizbollah claimed responsibility for the missile attack on Kiryat Shmona, adding that this was merely the first response to "the crimes of the enemy".

The Hizbollah's leader, Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, said that Hizbollah's main retaliation - which had not yet been visited upon the Israelis - would "astound the world".

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IN BRIEF

Today's weather
Cloudy with a cool easterly wind. Some sunny spells later in most areas.
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Son admits giving drug to let cancer mother die

Greater Manchester Police are investigating the death of an 80-year-old woman after a man said he gave her cancer-stricken mother a morphine overdose in a mercy killing.

Detectives have been called in by a coroner over the death in hospital of Alice Rowbottom after her son, Derek, admitted administering two huge doses of the drug. Mr Rowbottom, 44, told PA News: "I was trying to put her out of her pain."

The father-of-two from Ashton-under-Lyne, Greater Manchester, said that he had been unable to bear watching his widowed mother die slowly from liver cancer at North Manchester General Hospital. He told nursing staff what he had done after her death.

Mrs Rowbottom died on Wednesday after spending more than six weeks in hospital, unable to eat, drink or move without crying out in pain. Her son said he had pleaded with nursing staff to leave his mother alone. Mr Rowbottom, who was devoted to his mother, said he sat by her bedside every day. "One day I noticed there was a booster button on her diamorphine pump and I just pressed it until the syringe was empty. Then I said to one of the nurses: 'There's something wrong with this pump,' and they gave her another one and I did the same again."

A nurse spotted Mr Rowbottom administering the second dose and hospital security was called in. Mrs Rowbottom's morphine pump was replaced with a tamper-proof patch so that her son could administer no more drugs.

The hospital called in the

coroner when she died. Mr Rowbottom said: "At least I know she was in no more pain. I loved my mother and I couldn't leave her like that. She wouldn't have left me."

He was angry that doctors, who he said seemed unable to treat his mother, were unwilling to let her rest in peace. "They didn't even seem to know what was wrong with her. She was admitted with gall stones and I only heard yesterday she was supposed to have had cancer," he claimed.

He said detectives from Greater Manchester CID had visited him at home and told him that there would be an inquest and an investigation. He added: "I don't regret what I did. She was in so much pain I just did the best I could for her."

Mr Rowbottom said his two grown-up sons and his wife fully supported his decision. He now hopes the inevitable publicity surrounding his case will help force a change in the law to end the suffering of those who wish to die. "If the law prevents you from helping someone that you dearly love rest in peace it just wants changing."

A spokesman for North Manchester Hospital Healthcare Trust said it was concerned at the allegations and would be setting up an internal inquiry.

Mr Rowbottom's disclosure came a day after Scotland's leading law officer, the Lord Advocate, Lord Mackay of Drumadoon, said in Edinburgh that doctors in Scotland who stop treating coma patients officially regarded as incapable of recovery will not face criminal prosecution for murder or culpable homicide.

Passing out turns into an undercover operation



An official tipping water from his bowler hat at the Sovereign's Parade of officer cadets at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst yesterday. There were 650 cadets on parade, of whom 159 received commissions into the Army. Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Firemen see red over unisex changing room

RICHARD SMITH

Alarm bells are ringing at a fire station where 59 male firefighters have been ordered to share their changing room with a female colleague. The firefighters say they are appalled at the idea of stripping off in front of 24-year-old Rebecca Walker.

They claim some men were threatened with disciplinary action when they turned out on parade in civilian trousers rather than change into their

uniform in front of Miss Walker who was finishing her shift on blue watch.

The row began after Miss Walker was given permission to change in the male locker room instead of a first floor lavatory she had been using at Worcester Fire Station where she is the only female firefighter.

Leading fireman Bob Clifton, 49, said: "We may be hicks from the sticks but we have some ideas of common sense and decency - and it's gone out of the win-

dow. The main problem is when you are stripped off naked. Nobody should be put in this position - it's not a bloody peep show. I don't walk around stark naked in front of my daughter so why should I strip off in front of a woman at work."

"There is a lot of ill feeling down there. The men are genuinely concerned. Some of them now change behind their locker doors and some of the wives don't like the situation."

"It's not a case of being

prudish - it's just taking equal opportunities too far."

The Fire Brigades Union will meet Hereford and Worcester County Council chiefs next week in an bid to resolve the dispute. Reg Moule, FBU county secretary, said: "The problem is not of the firefighters' making. They have been told they have to lump it and I'm absolutely appalled. I've no objection to having communal locker areas but provision has not been made to allow people to change

with any decency," Miss Walker was unavailable to comment.

But a spokesman for the county council, which employs 10 female firefighters, said: "The decision to integrate the locker room is a part of a successful campaign by the county fire service to incorporate the council's equal opportunity measures throughout the brigade... This is not a question of asking people to strip naked - just a question of changing into their uniform."

The super-rich: Unknown businessman enters wealth league

Souvenir king becomes Britain's newest billionaire

CHRIS BLACKHURST

A man who made his money wooing Japanese tourists to his theme restaurants and souvenir kiosks by hiring staff who spoke their language has become Britain's newest billionaire, taking him within reach of Britain's richest man, Hans Rausing, with £2.88bn.

Joseph Lewis is eighth in line, after Mr Rausing, the Swedish drinks packaging king - he runs the Tetra Pak empire - who lives in West Sussex. While Mr Rausing, 70, maintains a low profile, the secretive Mr Lewis, 59, leaves him standing. He holds court in Lyford Cay, the playground of the super-rich in Nassau, Bahamas, but is rarely seen in public and has never submitted to a press photograph.

In the past year he has emerged, through his Abel investment vehicle, as owner of a 29 per cent stake in Christie's, the London auction house. The City is bracing itself for a full takeover bid from Mr Lewis, who recently took the unusual step, for him, of hiring a financial public relations firm.

If he does make a play for Christie's, Mr Lewis may find his fortune barely dented. Some observers reckon he could be worth as much as £5bn. From



Braced for takeover bid: Christie's auction house, London

leaving school and joining his father's restaurant business - they ran the Beefeater by the Tower of London, among others to which Japanese tourists flocked because of staff and signs in their own language - he has proved himself an astute

player of the world's currency markets, making millions from taking shrewd positions and building up an almost legendary reputation among dealers.

The family firm was sold in 1979, for an undisclosed sum, and he became a tax exile. He

owns a large slice of the Union discount house, and controls the English National Investment Trust. In North America, he owns a Florida country club and a security company.

He has some high-profile friends, notably John Francome, the former champion jockey, Michael Smurfit, the Irish paper tycoon and Robert Earl, founder of Planet Hollywood, but stays in the background. Maurice Barnfather, his newly-appointed PR man, said yesterday: "Mr Lewis is a private, quiet man who is not courting publicity and wishes to maintain a quiet, family life."

Mr Lewis shares eighth spot in the Sunday Times list of Britain's Richest 500 people, published tomorrow, with the Hinduja brothers, Gopi and Sri, and Viscount Rothermere. The Hinduja trade in chemicals, oil, motor vehicles and telecommunications, mainly on the Indian sub-continent but internationally as well, from their base in London.

They could soon be joined by Mr Lewis's friend, Mr Earl, who has seen his wealth shoot up from £80m to £350m in just one year, thanks to the world-wide success of Planet Hollywood and is well on his way to becoming Britain's first billionaire restaurateur.

Top 10 places in the wealth league

1. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn
2. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn
3. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn
4. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn
5. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn
6. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn
7. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn
8. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn
9. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn
10. Sir John Gollan, food packaging	£2.88bn

Amis relives his year-bashing

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

The novelist Martin Amis is considering writing his first work of non-fiction - an account of his *annus horribilis*.

The autobiographical work, based on last year, would give his side of the story about twelve months in which he left his wife and children, saw his famous father die and endured a barrage of bad publicity about his desire for a £500,000 advance on his most recent novel, *The Information*.

Speaking for the first time since he was "hung out to dry" in the gleeful row over his apparent greed and subsequent rift with his agent, Pat Kavanagh, and her husband, the novelist Julian Barnes, Amis also says he "still has no idea what all the fuss was about". Kavanagh was Amis's agent

when he made the "idle remark" to her that he would like the half-million pound advance for *The Information*. His publishers, Cape, were unable to come up with the money.

Amis then left Kavanagh for the New York agent Andrew Wiley - nicknamed "The Jackal" - who managed to squeeze the desired sum out of HarperCollins, in return for the novel and a book of short stories.

The story leaked out, gaining momentum from the remarks of novelist AS Byatt, who observed that writers should earn their advances and lamented the behaviour of the "strutting boys of the book world".

But Amis says he is still confused by the affair. "Was it because of my father? Was it just the money? But other writers get that kind of money; it's not so much for two books, written over several years - it's not a

huge income if you spread it out," he says in a remarkably frank interview with Waterstone's magazine published this week.

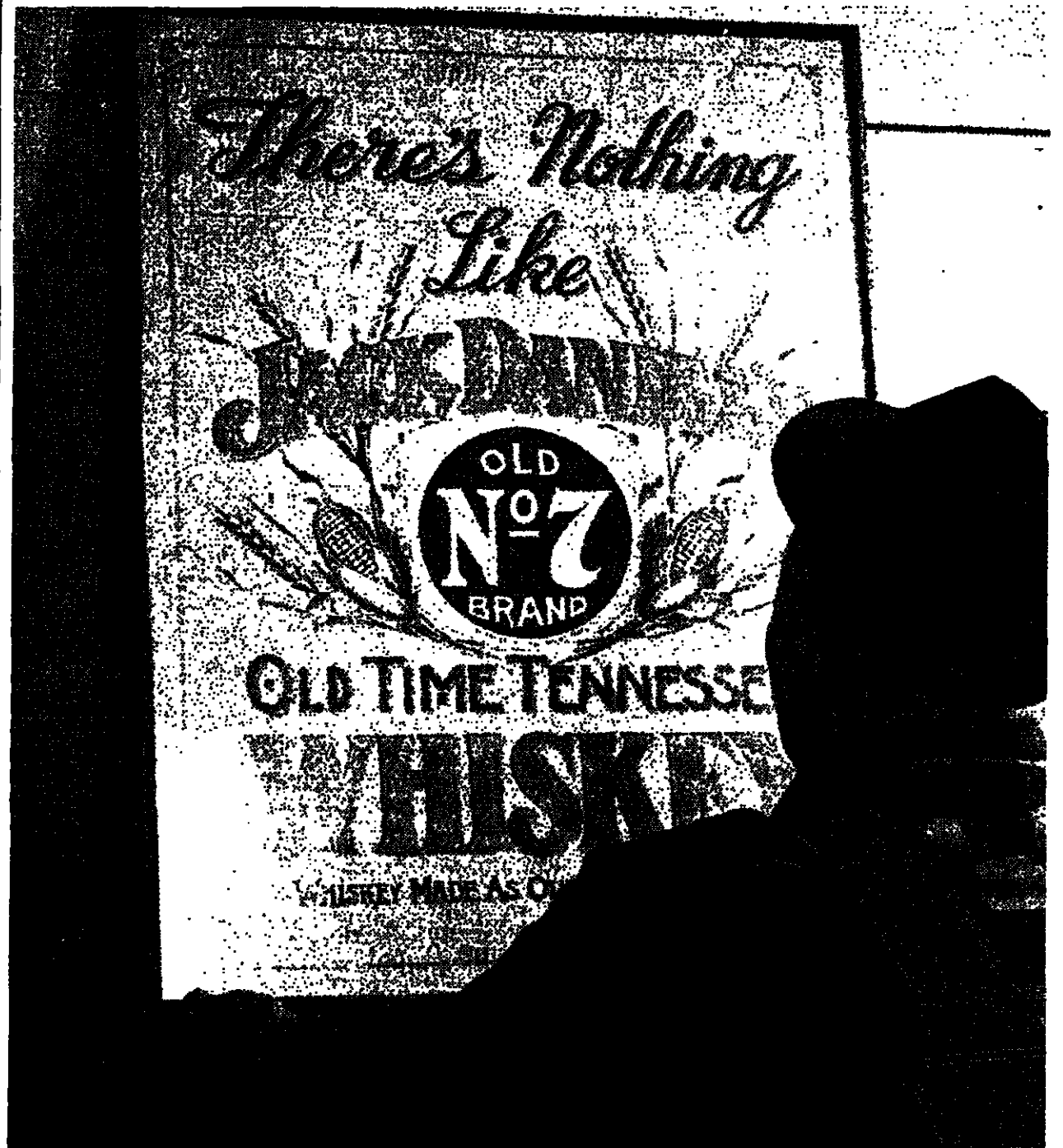
The rift with Barnes, a close friend, was painful, he admits. "It wasn't in the contract. I felt like I'd lost control. I was hung out to dry. An idle remark about what we should ask for my novel became like a banner over my head and I was marching alone."

The scandal over his decision to leave his wife and two children for the writer Isabel Fonseca also mystified Amis. "It seems very English to me. Everyone said I'd abandoned my children and was living in New York with an heiress, and I must say I sometimes wished I was. People said my affair with Isabel was a cliché - but excuse me, that's not how lives get lived, not my life anyway."

Amis talks about the death of his novelist father Kingsley and admits he felt energised, as though the "great obstacle of the father" had gone and he was fulfilling his destiny to be in the forefront. "It feels very different without him - although I haven't worked out what the difference is, exactly," he says.

"There's a way in which it's liberating. I don't run things by him in my mind, don't ask myself what Dad would think of that, or hear his voice inside me saying impatiently, 'Crappy idea'."

"Dad was my ghostly sub-editor. Although he didn't read my books, of course, though I read all of his. I dedicated *London Fields* to him and he read about 30 pages. He didn't get it... But yeah, I minded when it was clear he just couldn't finish my novels - it was a generational kind of taste, I think."



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

news



Walk on the wild side: Members of the Ramblers Association, who hold their annual meeting in Swansea, West Glamorgan, this weekend, braving the wind and rain yesterday to exercise their right to roam the hills and natural beauty of the Gower peninsula at Clyne Common Photograph: Rob Stratton

BNFL fined over Sellafield worker's radiation dose

British Nuclear Fuels was fined £25,000 yesterday after admitting "serious and significant" failures in safety that left a worker at its Sellafield plant contaminated with radioactivity.

Carlisle Crown Court was told that the company's system of controlling the amount of contamination from plutonium to which a 53-year-old contractor was exposed while

working in its main fuel separation area had failed. BNFL was also ordered to pay £16,104 costs after pleading guilty to a breach of safety regulations.

Henry Globe QC, for the prosecution, said it was "fortuitous" that plater James Martin had only received a relatively low dose of radioactivity as he worked to replace bolts on a ventilation duct without proper

protective clothing in June 1994. A partly-legible work permit had failed to state that Mr Martin should have been wearing gloves and a mask.

And there were a series of other errors in the permit, made worse by an operation supervisor's failure to inspect the area before work started and a company health monitor who did not know she should have

been there at all times. A temporary drainage bottle with which Mr Martin came into contact had been rigged up on the duct to cope with a leak and had been left "incomplete, unmarked and insecure" for 18 months, Mr Globe said.

"Individually the failures were of differing importance. Collectively, though, they have produced a serious and significant failure to discharge the statutory duty owed by the defendants to Mr Martin."

After it was discovered that he had become contaminated, changing-room staff wrongly allowed him to put back on his radioactive clothing before going to the surgery in the Cumbrian plant, increasing the risk of contamination spreading.

Privatisation row: Objectors mount fresh legal challenge

French win Brighton railway franchise

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

One of Britain's busiest rail networks was taken over by a French company yesterday which warned of job losses and declared there would be no new trains. CGEA, a subsidiary of the giant General des Eaux, has won the seven-year franchise to run services in the Network SouthCentral area.

The Government greeted the news as "an excellent deal for the taxpayer", while Labour said the sale was "knee deep in dogma and sleaze" and pointed out that the successful bidder was presently under investigation for fraud.

The news emerged as the Save our Railways pressure group announced a fresh challenge to rail privatisation. The High Court action is being taken against Roger Salmon, the rail franchising director, to allow British Railways Board to bid for lines. In December, the organisation delayed the franchising process when it won a Court of Appeal ruling that Mr Salmon had not followed government instructions on minimum service levels to be provided by successful bidders.

At Network SouthCentral, Antoine Hurel, the vice-chairman of London and South Coast—the company formed by CGEA to run the network—promised that while there may be redundancies, services would improve. Mr Hurel said there would be faster and upgraded services between London and Brighton, new off-peak and Sunday trains in south London and improvements in punctuality. The network covers routes out of Victoria, Charing Cross, and London Bridge stations to Kent, and Sussex.

He said the company was "comfortable" with the 600

"slam door" coaches on the route.

Mr Salmon said the rolling stock would last until the end of the franchise and that replacing it would not be economic. The Health and Safety Executive had approved the decision, he said.

Mr Hurel confirmed that the company was likely to reduce job numbers, but said cutting jobs was not a goal in itself and there would be negotiations before decisions were taken. He said the company would invest £10m to improve stations and trains. After applying for £106.28m in state subsidy, CGEA will receive £85.3m in the first year, gradually declining over seven years to £34.6m in 2002-3.

The parent company already has significant interests in the United Kingdom, including the Onyx street cleaning and refuse collection service and several small water companies. The French group has beaten off a combined challenge from Stagecoach, which won the South-west franchise, and the National Express coach company.

The Great Western is also already in the private sector. The East Coast Main Line is to be operated by the Bermuda-based company Sea Containers, and Gatwick Express will be run by National Express. The preferred bidder for Midland Main Line is also National Express, but this is the subject of an Office of Fair Trading inquiry.

Sir George Young, Secretary of State for Transport, yesterday's successful bidder was "one of Europe's foremost private rail operators". He said the Network SouthCentral deal was "excellent" for the taxpayer and the travelling public. But Clare Short, Labour's transport spokeswoman, said the sale "was knee-deep in dogma and sleaze".

Drivers set for further pay rise

On top of the 20 per cent increase won by train drivers' leaders at Great Western, the company will also have to enter negotiations on an annual pay increase, it emerged yesterday, writes Barrie Clement.

The massive 20 per cent offer came out of productivity talks, but the company also faces a claim for a "substantial" pay increase as part of the normal wage round. Great Western is likely to end up paying a further 3 to 3.5 per cent—the "going rate" in much of industry.

The other 24 train operators face the same pressure from Aslef, the train drivers' union, which although bitterly opposed to privatisation, believes the process presents considerable opportunities to improve drivers' pay.

Operators will attempt to pay for increases through productivity, but the growing power of Aslef could eventually have implications for train fares.

Aslef strategists contend that it will now be possible to pick companies off one by one—an approach which was not possible under British Rail.

Union officials are in discussions with all the other companies—including freight operators—where the same productivity claim has been submitted. Aslef is insisting that all companies honour British Rail's commitment to reduce the working week from 39 to 37 hours by August. Lew Adams, general secretary, said that the reduction in working time was not negotiable and warned of industrial action if any operator sought to ignore BR's pledge.

Mr Adams said there was no difficulty in dealing with a changing system in which most companies were still in the state sector, others were moving over and two had been privatised. "We are negotiating with whom we can and insisting on the April settlement date," he said.

"Clearly the outcomes will differ, but we are insisting that the old system in which a low basic was topped up by overtime and allowances is replaced with a pensionable salary."

At Great Western it is proposed that basic pay increases from £11,564 to £20,000. The offer is to be put to a ballot.

Graduates happy to go deeper into the red

Graduates are starting their working lives with increasingly bigger debts, according to research published today.

Six months after leaving university, last year's graduates owed an average of £2,930—a rise of 31 per cent on the average £2,236 debt in 1994, the survey, commissioned by Barclays Bank, reveals.

Those successfully pursuing their chosen careers were willing to get deeper into debt. Graduates on the first rung of the career ladder owed an average £3,564 compared with unemployed graduates, who had £2,374 to pay back.

The average graduate debt for men was £3,476, compared with £2,414 for women—explained by more men entering full-time jobs on higher pay.

The survey also found some regional variation, with thirty graduates from Wales and Northern England owing the least—£2,600 and £2,586.

Graduates from the South West owed the most—£3,280—because they were successful in entering chosen careers and more willing to incur debt. Attitudes towards student loans and being in the red have also changed. A total 64 per cent of last year's graduates were resigned to debt, or not bothered by it, compared to 50 per cent who were unconcerned in 1993.



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Düsseldorf disaster: Prosecutors focus on workmen in probe into fire which killed 16, including British soldier

Welders face charges over airport blaze

LOUISE JURY

German prosecutors may press criminal charges against welders believed to have started the fire at Düsseldorf airport which killed 16 people including a British soldier named yesterday as Martin Smith.

But airport authorities are also under investigation after it emerged that firefighters were not called until half an hour after the blaze broke out, and some passengers complained there were no alarms.

Martin Smith, 22, was travelling home to Tamworth, Staffordshire, on leave from his German base in Münster where he served with the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards when he was caught in the blaze which engulfed the terminal in 15 minutes.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said he was single and had enlisted in 1992. "This is a sad death," he added.

Seven Germans, including a seven-year-old boy, six French people and two Italians also died. The German government ordered federal buildings to fly their flags at half-mast.

Two people were critically ill last night out of 62 taken to hos-

pital suffering from the effects of thick black smoke which filled the hall and sparked panic among 2,500 staff and travellers.

German prosecutors said they were considering criminal charges against maintenance workers. They believe welders inadvertently melted a bitumen sealant which dripped onto a false floor containing electrical wiring.

PVC-covered cables began to

smoulder, emitting cyanide, chloride, carbon monoxide and possibly dioxin fumes which spread through the building's ventilation shafts.

Rolf Chanteaux, a prosecutor, said: "We have opened an investigation for negligent arson and negligent killing."

The fire, Germany's worst ever at an airport, broke out at 3.30pm on Thursday, but initially only the airport's own firefighters were called.

and five hours before the fire was brought under control.

Survivors spoke of smoke taking only seconds to envelop the 250-yard hall. Angelina Russo, an Italian who arrived with her two-month baby on one of the last flights to land, said: "I was frightened, just frightened."

The airport will not re-open until Monday. Spokesman Jörn Bücher said the whole of Terminal A was badly burnt-out,

Terminal B suffered moderate damage and there were some problems in Terminal C.

More than 160,000 passengers who should have passed through the airport, Germany's second biggest, this weekend will be re-routed.

Last night, British safety experts and engineers said they hoped sensible precautions would prevent a similar disaster in this country.

John Oldman, London Fire Brigade's divisional commander covering Heathrow, said they had regular exercises to enable quick response to any fire call.

They were alerted whenever there was a report of fire, providing a minimum of two pumps within five minutes and a further appliance within another three. "We are called on each and every occasion," he said. Fire regulations in Britain stipulated fire-stopping measures to prevent flames ripping along cables as appears to have happened in Düsseldorf.

But one particular problem for airports was that not all passengers would understand announcements if they were panicking in an emergency. "Nobody should be complacent. Clearly we will look very carefully to see if there are lessons to be learned from Düsseldorf," he said.

Peter Bressington, a fire engineer with Ove Arup engineers, said certain building features would create problems. People became affected more quickly by smoke in rooms with low ceilings, which are understood to have been a feature in Düsseldorf's 25-year-old airport. Finishing materials such as wood and plastic rather than steel and marble were also a danger.

Mr Bressington said his firm had also received reports from a member of its staff who was at the airport that the fire alarms were not working.

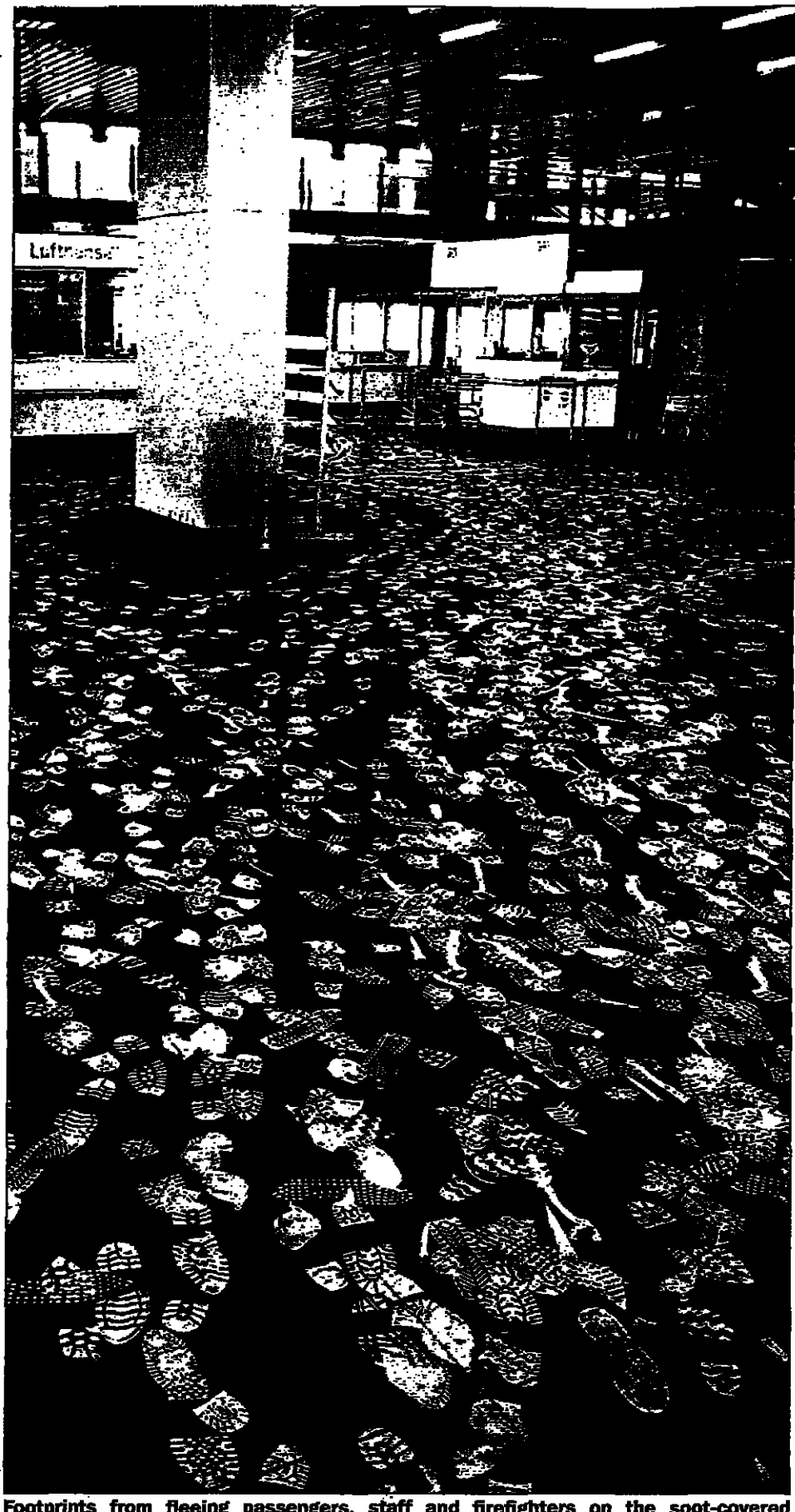
A spokeswoman for the British Airport Authority, which covers seven airports including Gatwick and Heathrow, said they had an "excellent safety record" and there were very strict rules to prevent a similar disaster here.

'Nobody should be complacent. We will look very carefully to see if there are lessons to be learned'



Firefighters inspect the burnt-out terminal at Düsseldorf

Photograph: Amd Wiegmann



Footprints from fleeing passengers, staff and firefighters on the soot-covered terminal floor at Düsseldorf after the fire that killed 16

Photograph: Edgar Schoepel

Bid to launch first gay TV channel

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

Britain will get its first gay and lesbian television channel next year, if an anonymous consortium of business men and women is successful in its licence application.

The Rainbow Television Network believes there is a lucrative market for "camp and straight" programming which will appeal not only to gay people, but those who are "gay-friendly".

The channel, believed to be planned for both cable and satellite, is the concept of an anonymous group of gay and straight business people who are all, according to a spokesman, very successful in their fields.

If their application for a 10-year licence is issued by the Independent Television Commission, the Rainbow Television Network hopes to start broadcasting next year between 6pm and 2am.

Emphasis will be on entertainment programmes, both commissioned and bought-in, and music, fashion, travel, drama and film. There will be a substantial live element, but no pornography.

Mike Johnson, spokesman for the consortium, said: "Some of it will be very camp and some extremely kitsch, but it will also be informative. We want to bring in new presenters, but they don't have to be gay."

The Rainbow Television Network believes its channel will be able to exploit the power of the so-called "pink pound", already the target of several dedicated newspapers and magazines.

It estimates there are up to seven million gays and lesbians in Britain, who are not properly served by the terrestrial cable or satellite stations. The network is aiming for 250,000 subscribers in its first year.

"The gay community has the money. They rarely have children, go out more, do the cinema, eat in restaurants and spend a lot on clothes," Mr Johnson said. "People are beginning to realise just how big gay spending power is."

Change in law will allow 16-year-olds behind bar

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Sixteen and 17-year-olds could be serving alcohol in pubs by the end of the year under proposals drawn up by the Government. Ministers want to amend licensing laws so that school leavers can go straight into the pub trade instead of waiting until they are 18.

The big brewers have registered their strong support for the reform, arguing that restrictions imposed by the Licensing Act of 1964 mean they lose "young talent" to other retail outlets.

In a consultation paper, the Home Office has suggested that school leavers be allowed to serve behind bars, provided they were on approved "pub apprentice" schemes leading to National Vocational Qualifica-

tions. At the moment, under-18s are banned from working in the bars of licensed premises.

A spokeswoman for the Catholic Church yesterday said bishops opposed the idea because young bar staff would not only serve alcohol, they would be more likely "to end up drinking it". The spokeswoman said it would be better if young Britons were introduced to alcohol at a younger age as part of normal family life, as they are in France. However drinking in Britain was seen as the preserve of adults. "In this country, teenagers have to drink 18 pints of lager in order to prove themselves. We do not have a mature attitude to alcohol, so we think the law should stay as it is."

However, neither the Roman Catholic Church nor the Church of England were consulted by the Government.

It is also understood that some smaller breweries have registered their opposition, partly on the grounds that they will not be able to offer apprenticeship schemes. They fear that the big brewers will have an unfair competitive advantage if they are able to take on young employees and pay them less.

The charity Alcohol Concern was involved in the consultation exercise and said it was "cautiously supportive" of the plan, provided there was strict supervision and that the effect of the change was monitored.

"The drinks trade as a whole has not got a magnificent record for training its employees, that's why we are emphasising the need for proper supervision."

Kim Parish, management development and training director at the Scottish and Newcastle brewery group is

urging ministers to press ahead with the change, insisting that it would ensure young bar staff were properly supervised.

"We would not put a 16-year-old in a position where there could be a potential problem. They would not be serving in pubs where large numbers of customers were drinking heavily," she said. Young trainees would be employed at family pubs or where the emphasis was on food.

Brewers point out that 16 and 17-year-olds already worked in pubs in Ireland, where there did not appear to be a problem.

The consultation period stipulated by the Home Office ended on 29 March and ministers are hoping to lay an order before parliament on 3 June. The new regulation would then come into effect by the end of the year.

Antiques guide couple sunk by £2.9m debts

The couple behind the world-famous *Miller's Antiques Price Guide* have called in the receivers after their company incurred debts of more than £2.9m.

Martin and Judith Miller, who now live apart, made a fortune from sales of the guide, but now face personal losses of more than £2m.

Mrs Miller is the co-presenter with Ross Benson of the Channel 4 antiques programme, *For Love or Money*.

The couple owned Chilton Park Hotel in Sandway near Maidstone, Kent, a 17th century hotel known for attracting the rich and famous. The Grade I listed building was under their management for 10 years.

They sold the property in December last year for £2m while trading under the name of Chilton Park Hotel - a name they changed recently to Waylen 1996.

But at the end of January this year the receivers Coopers & Lybrand were called in by Lloyds Bank to sort out mounting debts.

In a letter sent to creditors it was revealed that the couple's company owed £486,000 to the bank, £68,000 to Customs and Excise and £28,000 to the Inland Revenue. More than £2.3m is said to be directors' loans.

Businesses across the country are thought to be owed around £92,000 and receivers say that they are unlikely to receive the cash back.

The debt also includes those incurred while the couple were trading in partnership as MJM Property Developments.

A spokesman for Coopers & Lybrand, based in Maidstone, said: "Mr and Mrs Miller are a charming couple and I am not prepared to go into the amounts owed other than to say it is a rather large sum."

"There is a meeting with the creditors next week (at Bearsted, near Maidstone) and it is only right that we wait until then before going any deeper into the situation."

Mr Miller, who now lives in south-west London, was unavailable for comment yesterday.

Woman ran down cheating husband

A woman who ran down her husband outside his mistress's home escaped jail yesterday.

Anne Marie Lenehan drove into her husband Joseph as he goaded her in the street, Manchester Crown Court was told.

Mr Lenehan was thrown into the air and hit his head on the ground, causing blood to seep into his brain. He was detained in hospital for over a month, but he and his wife are trying to save their marriage and she is expecting their fourth child in July.

That saved Lenehan, 30, from jail, said Assistant Recorder Nicholas Gilchrist as he gave her a suspended prison sentence of 18 months.

"This case well illustrates that a motor car is a potential lethal weapon, every bit as dangerous as a gun," the judge said.

Lenehan had admitted causing grievous bodily harm.

Rowena Goode, for the prosecution, said the couple married in 1983 and had three children, Calum, nine, Laine, six, and Shannon, two.

But the marriage deteriorated and Mr Lenehan left the

family home in Chorlton, Cheshire, and had a series of affairs before beginning a relationship with Michelle Bowen.

Following an altercation at Miss Bowen's home in Chorlton on Boxing Day, 1994, in which the two women exchanged blows, Lenehan and her husband got back together and she thought she was pregnant. But one night last June she was told her husband's car was outside Miss Bowen's flat.

Lenehan went round with the children, threw a bag of his dirty clothes into the hall, and drove off. Two hours later she returned and her husband stood in front of the car goading her to run him over. She hit him at between 10 and 20mph, knocking him over the bonnet. Lenehan later gave herself up to police.

Philip Curran, for the defence, said Lenehan had been a devoted mother who suddenly found out her husband was having affairs. "It is not surprising that on that night she was agitated to say the least. It would have taken a super-human effort to keep her cool."



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news

Criminal justice: Giving victims greater voice in punishment rejected by judge in continuing war of words with Home Secretary

Taylor renews attack against sentence plans

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

The country's most senior judge yesterday launched a fresh attack on the Home Secretary's handling of the criminal justice system when he warned against further unwelcome importations from the American legal system.

Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice, cautioned against giving victims too loud a voice in the punishments and sentences handed out by the courts to their attackers. But he outlined his own proposals for informing courts of the effects on crime on the victims.

Re-opening the war of words between the judiciary and the Government over the latest plans to hand down tough new minimum sentences, Lord Taylor said the current fixation with sentencing as the key to the justice system was "a highly fashionable error". And he said that to talk of justice for victims in terms of sentencing was not only to look at the system "through the wrong end of the telescope", but also to ignore a major section of it.

But he accepted, in a speech to a Victim Support conference



Lord Taylor: Warning over American importations

in Newcastle upon Tyne, that the views of victims should play a part in the courts process. In another swipe at Michael Howard's sentencing plans, he said he hoped that in the "current stampede to build new prisons" the requirements of Victim Support should not be overlooked.

He suggested that police investigating crimes should make notes of the impact of the crime on the victim and this could be passed on to the court. But he warned that it should not be

used as a tool to impose unjustly harsh sentences and he rejected outright introducing the American system of victims making statements to the court.

He added later: "The notion that if you sentence longer and longer and longer it's going to be better and better for the public is quite wrong."

"The public has an interest in seeing that people are rehabilitated and, of course, they should be punished appropriately. But the idea that because a particular victim has suffered very severe injuries, let's say, there must be absolutely comparable injury or detention on the perpetrator is, I think, inappropriate."

Yesterday's criticism of government penal policy was, by Lord Taylor's recent standards, a muted affair. Last month he declared all-out war - accusing the Government of introducing a succession of ill-thought out, hasty and contradictory criminal justice legislation and warning of the dangers of undermining public confidence.

Earlier this week, Judge Stephen Tumim, former chief inspector of prisons, added his voice to the mounting opposition from nearly all practi-



Slow progress: A cell at Holloway at the turn of the century, left, and stopping out for the last time yesterday at Armley Photograph: Bob Collier

ers within the criminal justice system. Even some senior police officers have broken ranks to say more should be invested in prevention rather than prison for criminals who are caught and convicted.

Lord Taylor won immediate support yesterday from penal reformers. Paul Cavadin, of the

Penal Affairs Consortium, warned that giving the victim too great a say could undermine justice. "It would be wrong for a court to pass a heavier sentence on the ground that the victim favoured severe punishment. Some victims are understandably vengeful, while others are extremely forgiving."



End to slopping out brings flush of pride

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Friday 12 April, 1996, will be remembered as one of the greatest days in penal history - the end of "slopping out" in the country's 136 jails.

As the last plastic pot was ceremoniously discarded at Armley jail in Leeds, West Yorkshire - the last prison to have flushing lavatories for all installed - penal reform groups applauded the end of the "single most degrading element of imprisonment this century".

No more queues of men and women shuffling along to empty their pots of the night's waste in the sluice rooms, no more stench and no more parcels of excrement lobbed out of windows - making the cells bearable but fouling the grounds.

Anne Widdecombe, the prisons minister, and Richard Tilt, Director General of the Prison Service, travelled to the Victorian jail on the outskirts of the

city to take credit for the six year programme to install integral sanitation in all jails. "I am glad this unpleasant daily ceremony has been brought to an end at last," said Ms Widdecombe.

But the man whose relentless campaign really brought about the reform was not invited. From the moment he became the Chief Inspector of Prisons eight years ago, Judge Stephen Tumim, determined to end "slopping out". He said yesterday: "It seemed to me that you could not pursue other penal reforms without first tackling the most basic and giving people some dignity."

He commissioned a report and it was adopted by Lord Woolf who, in his review of prisons following the Strangeways riots in 1989, said it was an "uncivilised and degrading process, which destroyed the morale of prisoners and staff".

Ministers took the massive project on board and it was completed just a few weeks

short of target - but no one is complaining about that, only that the issue was never tackled long ago.

The irony that Armley - built 150 years ago - was the last to convert was not lost on prison watchers. Victorian jails like Armley were actually built with sanitation systems - they were ripped out at the turn of the century to make way for more accommodation and to make life "tougher" for inmates.

"This is a very welcome return to Victorian values," said Paul Cavadin, chair of the Penal Affairs Consortium.

For Judge Tumim, who lost his contract as Chief Inspector of Prisons, because, according to insiders, he had become a thorn in the side of the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, it will become a fitting epitaph.

"I will be perfectly happy to be remembered as the person who introduced the sound of thousands of flushing lavatories to Britain's jails," he said.

Queen Mother defended over Mrs Simpson

Prince Edward yesterday defended the Queen Mother against charges that she harboured a personal hatred for the late Duchess of Windsor.

The Prince was speaking after the press screening of *Edward on Edward*, his documentary about the abdication and exile of his great-uncle, the Duke of Windsor.

The Queen Mother - the prince's grandmother - is hardly mentioned in the two-hour documentary. But Prince Edward said afterwards: "There are all sorts of stories in the public domain involving the Queen Mother which I believe are actually totally inaccurate."

"She, like every other royal lady in the household at the time, was put in an utterly impossible position by Edward's decision to marry a divorcee. They were never going to be able publicly to acknowledge her in any way."

"The inevitable gulf that occurred has been interpreted by people to say that it was a deep-seated and personal matter which, from all that I have discovered, just isn't the case."

The Prince's comments contradict the widely-held belief that the Queen Mother never forgave the Windsors for catapulting her husband, George, on to the throne, for which he was not prepared. The Duchess was never granted the title Her Royal Highness, and lived in exile with her husband for most of their lives after they married.

Prince Edward also defends his great-uncle against historians' charges that he collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War. In the documentary, made by his own Ardent Production company, he says: "The Duke may have been awkward, selfish and intransigent to deal with, but there's no evidence that he would ever betray his country."



The Queen Mother (above) and the Duchess of Windsor



The lack of documentary evidence has been interpreted by some critics as indicating a cover-up. "I can't uncover any evidence of that, and I have tried," said the Prince, who gained privileged access to royal archives in making the programme. Not only the Queen Mother, but other members of the Royal Family, including the Queen, were largely omitted from the documentary, to be screened in two parts later this month. "That was quite deliberate," the Prince said. "I didn't feel it was necessary to put them through that."

Edward on Edward, made in association with Desmond Wilcox, will be transmitted on ITV on Tuesday 23 April and Tuesday 30 April.

Science 'failing to keep its promises'

Modern science has failed and brought more diseases together with the destruction of the environment, according to a leading American biologist.

Professor Richard Levins said there had been impressive achievements in modern science but also dramatic failures including the appearance of new diseases such as toxic shock syndrome and chronic fatigue syndrome as well as the resurgence of old ones such as malaria and cholera; increased stress, anxiety, overwork and unemployment caused by industrial design which was intended to result in greater efficiency; new pest problems created by pesticides which poisoned the natural habitat and new pathogens created by antibiotics which were resistant to drugs.

In a lecture in Edinburgh where he was being presented with the annual Edinburgh Medal and £5,000 for his work, the Professor of Population Sciences at Harvard School of Public Health criticised science for being driven to make new discoveries without considering the consequences.

He said science should be re-evaluated to take account of the long-term effects on society. "We have bred plants and animals to fit our technologies, invented new ways of communicating and of diagnosing diseases and predicting the weather. But science also has had dramatic failures... promises of understanding and progress have not been kept, and the application of science to human affairs has often done great harm," he said.

It was no surprise there had been an anti-science backlash with research spending cuts and young people turning away from the subject, Professor Levins said. In his appeal for a new approach he called for scientists to change their attitude.

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British Psychological Society: Teenage suicides, masculinity and classroom victimisation under scrutiny. Liz Hunt reports

School ship disaster survivors in distress

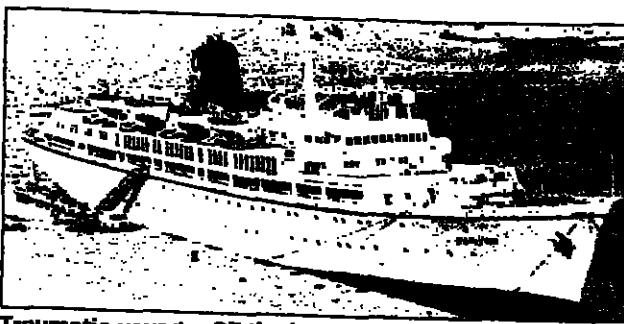
Almost one in 10 teenage survivors of a British school's cruise ship disaster have attempted suicide, and more than half have suffered severe psychological distress in the seven years since the sinking, psychologists said yesterday.

The survivors, now in their early twenties, are also at least a year behind their peers in their academic studies and fewer of them have gone to university or completed degrees.

Julie Nurrish, a researcher at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, said the findings suggest that the low uptake of counselling and support by the survivors following the disaster may be a factor in the persistence and extent of symptoms.

The *SF Jupiter* had just set sail from Piraeus, in Greece, with nearly 400 British schoolchildren, aged 14 to 15, on board when it was rammed by a freighter on 21 October 1988. It rapidly took on water and sank within 40 minutes. Four people died, a pupil and a teacher from Birmingham, and two Greek sailors.

Speaking on the second day of the British Psychological Society annual conference in Brighton yesterday, Ms Nurrish said that the follow-up study of survivors in the intervening seven years had produced some alarming findings. There had been 14 suicide attempts in the group of 168 survivors traced so far (9 per cent),



Traumatic voyage: *SF Jupiter* sank in 40 minutes

compared with one in the control group of 58. A survivor had committed suicide in 1993.

Some 52 per cent of survivors had suffered post-traumatic stress disorder, with symptoms including flashbacks of the event, panic attacks, avoidance of water and boats, and distancing from their close family and friends. These symptoms had persisted for more than five years in 14 per cent of the group.

More than two-thirds of the survivors had suffered from depression or other forms of mental illness since the accident.

"We did not expect to find this degree of psychological morbidity," Ms Nurrish said. "All were offered counselling but very few - about 20 per cent - actually took it up. Further research is needed to determine if this was a factor."

There were more survivors with A-levels at the time of the follow-up than in the control

group, indicating that they should have gone on to university, but many did not.

The Young Adult Research Team, funded by the Medical Research Council, also interviewed mothers of survivors,

"Some mothers said their sons and daughters went away as children and came back adults," Ms Nurrish said.

Overall, the survivors said they could not plan for the future because they knew it could be cut short at any time. Most of them thought they were going to die during the sinking and it is this feeling that they have never forgotten, she added.

Ms Nurrish said that further analysis of findings from the three year study, to be completed this year, may identify "protective affects" in the early lives of some survivors which limited the trauma they suffered. "People do get through events, and why they do is a very important question."



Contemporary design: Beatrice Hosegood, from the auctioneers Bonhams, placing flowers in an earthenware circular vessel by James Tower, which is expected to fetch £2,500-£3,500 when auctioned next week. Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Middle-aged find it tougher to be macho

LIZ HUNT

Men get less macho as they grow older. Those who behave badly in their youth can transform themselves into caring, sharing new men in middle age, a new study has shown.

These males are less likely to view women as sex objects, to favour toughness and the use of force, or disapprove of signs of femininity in other men, the BPS conference heard.

Professor John Archer, an expert on the mysteries of machismo in western culture, said the burden of jobs, marriage, and children, may be more significant than diminishing testosterone levels in the loss of macho. Less pressure to attract women and to prove to others that you are "hard and tough" is also a factor.

"A strongly physical masculinity is more important at younger ages as a strategy for competing with other men, with the ultimate aim of attracting women," Professor Archer said. "At older ages ... they have less need to be involved in this type of masculinity."

Professor Archer, from the Central Lancashire University, gave a questionnaire on a macho values to 600 men from a wide range of backgrounds. They were aged between 18 and 45 years and living in the North

West of England. The questionnaire measured how much they agreed with statements such as "Wife swapping is fine as long as both men agree" - "There are too many wimps and cowards around today" - and "Real men don't back away from bar-room confrontations."

They were also asked how much they agreed with statements such as "It's a good thing for men to cry". Professor Archer found that the older the men, the less they endorsed macho attitudes. "We didn't anticipate this negative relationship with age," he said.

A further analysis of the group found that unemployed and manual workers revealed more macho tendencies, correlating with the traditional view of masculinity which is less prevalent in the more educated middle class samples, such as office workers and students.

The scores for sportsmen were lower than expected, but they were largely drawn from the middle classes so that occupation rather than choice of a particularly masculine sport was a determining factor.

The study also revealed a close link between heavy drinking and perceptions of masculinity. "Heavy drinking ... does provide yet another way for boys to seek to become men," Professor Archer added.

'Mind games' used by school bullies

School bullies who perfect psychological techniques of torment can inflict greater long term harm on their victims than those who use more direct physical methods, according to new research, writes Liz Hunt.

David Hawker, a psychologist at Keele University, said the most dangerous type of bullying could be overlooked by schools and teachers.

He told the BPS conference that pupils and teachers worried more about physical bullying and rated psychological bullying - such as being shunned by their class-mates - as less serious and upsetting to the victim.

However, a survey of 178 junior (aged 8 to 9) and secondary school children (aged 11 to 12) in six north Staffordshire schools, found that feelings linked to victimisation - depression, anxiety, loneliness, social dissatisfaction and low self-esteem - resulted more from psychological bullying.

It could involve social exclusion from games, parties and outings, or being sent to Coventry by classmates, and the less serious psychological subordination, such as social put-

downs, teasing or name-calling. Research suggests that these forms of bullying, particularly social exclusion, appear to have more damaging long-term effects.

Girls were more adept at psychological bullying, through social exclusion of the victim or indirect means, such as social manipulation, or talking behind someone's back, for example. They believed physical bullying was more stressful.

Boys preferred the physical approach, and told researchers that social exclusion worried them more. As both groups got older, psychological methods became the bullying technique of choice.

Previous research suggests that 1 in 10 children is bullied at school, about three per class. Mr Hawker, and his colleague Michael Boulton from the Department of Psychology at Keele said there was growing awareness of bullying in its different forms in schools.

However, children as young as five appeared to accept bullying as a fact of life, and did not believe it could be stopped by rules and regulations.



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news

Shephard urges discipline on parents



Shephard: Sanctions on parents of unruly children

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Parents would be forced to ensure that their children go to school and that they behave properly when they get there under legislation announced by Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, yesterday.

A new package of measures revealed by Mrs Shephard at the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers conference in Glasgow would tighten up many areas of school discipline, she said.

Parents could be told that they might lose their right to

choose their children's schools if they persistently offended, she suggested.

Schools could be allowed to exclude children for up to 45 days in any one year, extending the limit from the current 15. They might also be allowed to insist that parents back their discipline policies—at present, they can refuse to allow their children to be kept in detention.

Mrs Shephard also said there would be inspections of all special units for disruptive pupils. Poor reports have been issued on many of the first such units to receive these visits.

She criticised both schools and parents for having abused

the regulations on exclusions, allowing indefinite suspensions—now abolished—to drag on too long. Children had been left in limbo too often, she said.

"Good behaviour and discipline in schools are key foundations of good education. Without an orderly atmosphere in the classroom effective teaching and learning cannot take place," she said.

After a consultation period, legislation could be put forward as soon as this autumn, she said.

Teachers have complained that they cannot enforce discipline because parents are often un-cooperative, and that rules on parental choice often force

them to take pupils who have been excluded elsewhere.

In future, parental choice could be withdrawn in such cases and instead children could be placed by local authorities in the schools of their choice.

However, Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the union, said that the legislation would need to be backed by resources. He criticised Mrs Shephard for suggesting that schools had been too eager to exclude pupils in the past. The numbers have risen to 15,000 per year.

"If the profession were exclusion-happy we would not have 15,000. I think we would have more than 150,000 ex-

cluded every year. It's all very well to say that we can't leave these kids in limbo. But I don't want teachers and the majority of children left in hell."

John Dunford, president of the Secondary Heads' Association, said many schools were excluding children because their parents had refused to comply with other sanctions.

"We have to put emphasis on the welfare of other children in the school as well as on the one child who is being disruptive," he said.

Meanwhile, Mrs Shephard admitted that not all parents in four pilot areas introducing nursery vouchers this spring

had applied to take part. However, she said, Norfolk had 25 new nursery units and 400 private providers wanting to offer places. In Wandsworth, south-west London, 76 per cent of parents had applied for vouchers and in Norfolk 87 per cent had done so.

Mrs Shephard was also called upon to defend the school inspection system, which has been criticised by teachers this week for being bureaucratic.

"I regard the inspection process as one of the most important of the Government reforms. Let me say very clearly: it is here to stay," Mrs Shephard said.

Killer used skills learnt in abattoir

A former slaughterman who used his professional skill to kill his neighbour, disembowel and then hack her body in half, was ordered to be held at Rampton psychiatric hospital by an Old Bailey judge yesterday.

Jason Baldwin, 28, was sent there for further medical reports before sentencing after admitting the manslaughter of Maxine Boot, 37, on the grounds of diminished responsibility. The prosecution accepted his plea of not guilty to murdering her.

Baldwin—described as a psychotic loner with bizarre fixations—had taken an irrational dislike to the burger bar waitress who had a bed-sit in the block where he lived in Guildford, Surrey.

When they were alone in the premises on 10 March last year, he attacked her with a hatchet, sheath knife and pruning saw.

"It was a savage killing. She had severe head injuries and her throat was cut. She was then disembowelled with considerable professional skill in the course of the gruesome exercise after her death," Robert Seabrook QC, for the prosecution, said.

Baldwin then cut Miss Boot's body in half through the lower torso using the pruning saw to sever her spine. He had been sacked from his job at a local abattoir after attacking a work-mate earlier in the year, causing him grievous bodily harm. He became a dustman and made use of the black refuse sacks to wrap his victim's body before throwing it into a nearby pond, where police recovered the remains five days later.

The two halves of the body had been stuffed into bin bags bearing the initials of Guildford Borough Council and the number 28 printed on them. It was Baldwin's dustbin round number, and one with which he had a "bizarre fixation".

From medical reports—which described him as suffering from an extremely mixed personality disorder which suggested psychosis—Baldwin appeared to have decided to kill Miss Boot in advance and taken "some considerable pleasure from it".

Keyhole surgery 'takes longer and costs more'

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Hi-tech keyhole surgery to remove the gall bladder—an operation widely adopted by surgeons because of its "obvious advantages"—takes longer to do and offers no advantages over more conventional surgery, a hospital study has shown.

The finding yesterday led to calls in the medical journal *The Lancet* for more such studies into the effectiveness of surgical techniques.

New ones are frequently adopted without trials to prove they are superior to existing operations. Without more studies, the journal argues, surgeons will continue to face the charge that up to half their research is of questionable value.

The study at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield was rare for being a randomised controlled trial—the standard way to assess new drugs. Two hundred patients were allocated at random to a small incision operation or the keyhole technique, and the assessment of the outcome was hidden by providing dressings which masked the nature of the surgical scar.

The study found that in terms of effectiveness, speed of recovery, hospital stay, time to get back to work and full

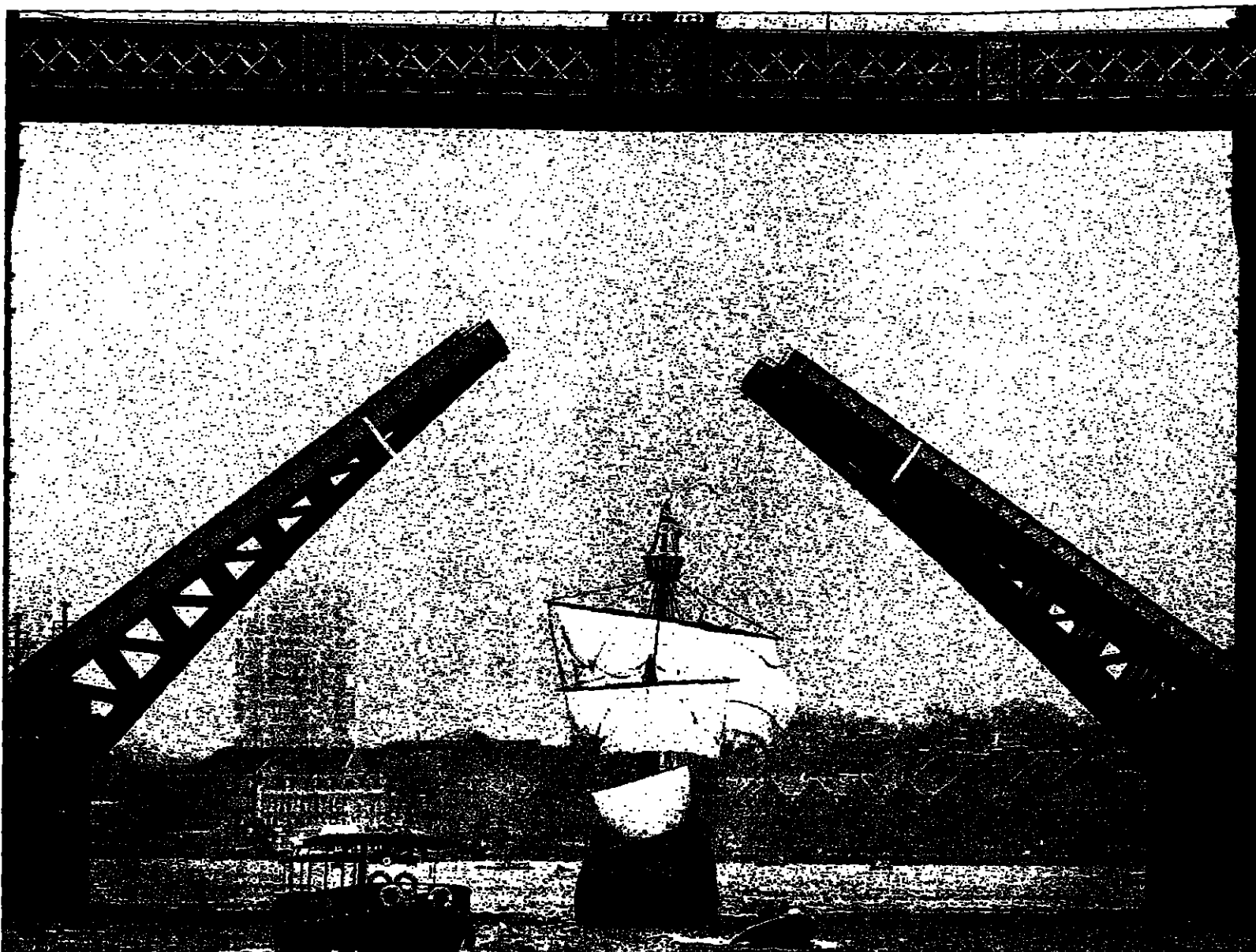
activity, the keyhole method offered no advantage. However, the operation took more than half as long again to perform on average—65 minutes against 40 minutes—and is likely to be more expensive.

Gall bladder removal is one of the commonest operations, and surgeons have adopted the new technique because it appeared to have "obvious advantages" which have not been proved in practice. Mr Ali Majeed, the surgeon who headed the study, said. That may be suggested, have had much to do with manufacturers' investment in the instruments and imaging systems needed to perform it.

Such randomised studies account for less than 10 per cent of surgical research. *The Lancet* said, surgeons preferring simply to report a series of cases, an approach which tends to provide a more subjective comparison to existing methods.

The Lancet acknowledged difficulties in designing controlled trials for surgery, but a separate report showing the efficacy of a new Japanese operation for stomach cancer shows random studies can be done.

Surgeons must find ways to improve case series studies and to plan randomised trials, *The Lancet*'s editor, Dr Richard Horton, said.



Passing through: A replica of the 15th-century ship *Matthew*, in which the explorer John Cabot left Bristol heading for Japan but found North America instead, sailing through Tower Bridge, London, during trials before a voyage to mark the 500th anniversary of the journey. Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

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Death of seven-year-old pilot: World condemns 'exploitative' record trip that led to disaster

Air chiefs to review flying by children



Family support: Lisa Hathaway, pilot Jessica Dubroff's mother, with her other daughter, Jasmine, three

TIM CORNWELL
Los Angeles

A note placed at the crash site yesterday where Jessica Dubroff was killed read "God's newest little angel". But world reaction to the death of the seven-year-old girl trying to become the youngest pilot to fly across America was more angry than sympathetic.

While Jessica's mother asked people to "let children fly if they want to fly", the US Federal Aviation Administration promised to review rules covering underage and unlicensed pilots.

American flying experts called the flight an irresponsible, exploitative adventure. "Dead for a record" proclaimed the Swiss daily *Le Matin*. Australian radio news called it a "publicity stunt that ended in a disaster".

"I feel that there is no place in aviation for such foolishness as this type of flight," was one comment on CompuServe's on-line aviation forum.

Jessica's aircraft crashed

shortly after take-off in a residential street in Cheyenne, Wyoming, early on Thursday. Her instructor Joe Reid and her father, Lloyd, who was in the back of the four-seater aircraft, died with her.

"Clearly I would want all my children to die in a state of joy," said her mother Lisa Hathaway. "I would prefer it was not at age seven, but, God, she went with her joy and her passion, and her life was in her hands."

The girl from a small northern California town, with curls, a wistful look in her eye and a blue baseball cap with the logo "Women Fly", was the picture of American girlhood.

Jessica was reported as a passionate reader of biographies of Amelia Earhart, the pioneer pilot who disappeared on a trans-Pacific flight and is still one of America's favourite romantic heroines.

Like the Apollo 13 space mission, her flight had attracted only passing attention until it went wrong, but yesterday her face dominated newspapers



Flight to tragedy: Jessica's aircraft is lifted from the street where it crashed in Cheyenne Photograph: Ed Andrieski

and television shows. "I cared deeply for this little girl," said the mayor of Cheyenne, Leo Pando, breaking down in tears with memories of his own daughter who was drowned in a flood at 16. "She had a refreshing optimism that is plainly lacking in today's world."

Jessica, who needed a booster chair to see out of the windshield and aluminium exten-

sions to reach the pedals, would have struggled to exert the 60lbs of pressure that the FAA generally assumes a pilot can put on controls. She was not legally flying the four-seater Cessna but at present children of any age may take control under supervision if a pilot deems it safe.

Bystanders said Jessica was clearly at the controls when the

aircraft took off in driving rain at an airport 6,000ft high, where thinner air meant its engines had substantially less power. The temperature at was also near freezing. She had only four months experience in the cockpit and was on the second leg of her planned 6,500 mile round trip.

The unofficial record for trans-continental flights was set

by Daniel Shankin in 1991, just a month older than Jessica, and an eight-year-old made the flight last year. "It's the American way," said Drew Stokette, of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, which like other industry groups has been nervous about such events. "If an 11-year-old does it, a 10's going to do it, then a nine, then an eight, then a seven."

IN BRIEF

Britain attacks Gibraltar customs checks

London — The Foreign Office Minister, David Davis, said yesterday that there was "no justification" for Spain's introduction of extra customs checks on the border with Gibraltar, writes Christopher Bellamy. The checks were introduced following the loss of a Spanish helicopter in pursuit of a drug smugglers' boat on Thursday. In a strongly worded statement, Mr Davis said drug smuggling in the area took place at sea and there was "no evidence that drugs cross the land frontier". He added: "If Spain has any constructive proposals for further co-operation, we will of course consider them carefully."

China roots out military pen pal menace

Peking — The discipline and ideological purity of China's army is being contaminated by soldiers' pen pals, the *Liberation Army Daily* warned. "Some soldiers become bored and dissatisfied and blindly think that the outside world is exciting," the newspaper said. *Reuters*

Kantor to replace Brown

Washington — The US Trade Representative, Mickey Kantor, (right) is President Clinton's choice to replace Ron Brown as Commerce secretary. Mr Kantor has a reputation as a tough advocate of US trade interests abroad. Mr Brown was killed when his plane crashed in Croatia while he was on a Balkan tour. The news came as Mr Clinton and Mr Kantor were promoting efforts by the trade representative's office to lower the trade deficit with Japan. *AP*



Florida bomb kills woman

Plantation, Florida — A woman was killed and three children were injured when a package exploded just after it was delivered to a home in an affluent neighbourhood. A child took the package inside and it exploded when it was opened. The woman was dead and a 13-year-old boy, 10-year-old girl and 7-year-old boy were injured. The US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms sent an investigator to the scene.

Jackal targeted French minister

Paris — The international guerrilla "Carlos the Jackal" considered attacking the then-Socialist justice minister Robert Badinter in the 1980s, *Le Monde* reported yesterday. The late Francois de Grossouvre, a close aide to the late president Francois Mitterrand, was another possible target. *Reuters*

US turns Okinawa airport over to locals

Tokyo — Setting the stage for a visit next week by President Clinton, the US has agreed to return a large airfield on Okinawa to local landowners over the next five to seven years. Sentiment against the American bases have been running high since three US servicemen raped a schoolgirl last September. *AP*

Sri Lanka foils seaborne Tamil attack

Colombo — Naval gunboats destroyed two Tamil rebel fishing trawlers laden with explosives, one inside Colombo's busy harbor and one approaching it. Both trawlers exploded when the gunboats opened fire. Sailors said they believe at least five rebels were killed, including two from carrying explosives. *AP*

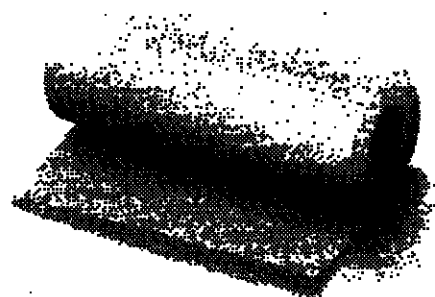
HK 'heads for rosy future' under China

Hong Kong — The Chinese official in charge of Hong Kong affairs painted a rosy picture of events after the colony's return to China next year. "Hong Kong will still be a free port, an international finance and trade centre. Hong Kong's future will be even better," Lu Ping, director of Beijing's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, told a business conference. *Reuters*

King asks Aznar to form government

Madrid — Spain's King Juan Carlos formally asked conservative leader Jose Maria Aznar to form a government on the basis of his slim win in an election last month. *Reuters*

How to cash a cheque.



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timetables and washing instructions to knitting patterns and recipes. RNIB's work is especially important if you consider that many visually impaired people live alone. For more details about RNIB call us on 0345 023040.



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*Rebased amongst 6383 people in March 1996.

10
international

War in Lebanon: New Katyusha attacks and renewed aerial bombardment escalate crisis, as refugees stream north from Tyre

Peres warns as rockets strike Israeli town

PATRICK COCKBURN
Kiryat Shmona

The Katyusha rockets which fell on the Israeli border town of Kiryat Shmona early yesterday morning led to an immediate escalation in the crisis in Lebanon. Within hours Israel was threatening to bombard 41 Lebanese villages just north of the Israeli occupation zone inside Lebanon.

"We recommend that all people living in areas from which Katyushas were launched at Israeli villages now leave," said Lieutenant General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, the Israeli chief of staff.

Sitting beside him in the mess hall of an Israeli military base a few miles from the border, Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, added: "If they thought that the Katyusha is a superior weapon then we will have to remind them that we have missiles that are better." He said that if Hizbollah, the Lebanese guerrilla movement, thought that Kiryat Shmona was an inviting target and a point of Israeli weakness, then they would discover that the same was true of Beirut.

The deadline for Lebanese villagers to flee was first given at 2.30pm and later extended by two hours. United Nations officers in south Lebanon estimated that Israeli artillery had fired 2,000 shells during the first part of the day, presumably directed at areas outside the 41 villages. It became clear during the morning that an early casualty of the mounting crisis was the understanding, brokered by the US in 1993, under which Israel and Hizbollah pledged to avoid hitting civilian targets.

Overnight Hizbollah had not retaliated for Israeli air raids on Beirut, Baalbek and Tyre the previous day. It seemed possible that they would wait before counter-attacking. Then, shortly after 9am, at least two Katyusha rockets landed in Kiryat

Shmona, a nondescript town of 23,000 people. One rocket landed beside a petrol tank and badly burning the woman driver.

A second Katyusha landed beside a eucalyptus tree, severing branches and peppering houses on both sides of the road with shrapnel. A shard of the rocket narrowly missed the head of Yitzhak Michaeli, a factory worker, who was drinking coffee and reading a book in his flat after returning from taking his family to the safety of Tel Aviv.

"I feel so bad," said Mr Michaeli, still looking shaken as he pointed to a hole in the wall at head height. He said he was only saved because he took cover when he heard one rocket explode in the distance, a few seconds before a second blew up across the street.

Mr Michaeli had no doubts about what the government should do. "They should go into Lebanon and give them a few good hits." He said there were only 7,000 people left in town.

His neighbour Ilan Petto, a disc jockey, said: "After Peace for Galilee [the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982] there was peace here." This is not strictly true - and the invasion created Hizbollah - but Mr Petto still believes "if we are tough with them, they will stop".

Nobody had any doubts that the new Lebanese crisis will help the right-wing Likud party. Haim Corlikr, 20, said: "Everybody will vote Likud here. Peres talks and doesn't do anything."

Kiryat Shmona is a right-wing town, but this is bad news for Mr Peres 50 days before the Israeli election. When Benjamin Netanyahu, the Likud leader and his rival to be Prime Minister visited Kiryat Shmona earlier in the week he was cheered. The new Likud sticker "Peace with Security" is common in the back windows of cars.

Mr Peres has done his best to avoid military retaliation in

Lebanon, but the political costs in a close election race became insupportable. He cannot afford to look weak or irresolute. He is only just beginning to recover from the political damage caused by the four suicide bombs which killed 62 people in Israel in February and March. The casualties and damage inflicted on Northern Israel this week is slight but they could lose Mr Peres the election.

This explains why the Prime Minister and his Chief of Staff were in Kiryat Shmona within hours of yesterday's Katyusha attack. "What happened this morning did not surprise us," said Mr Peres. He made clear that Lebanon was not going to be allowed to rebuild its economy in peace if Hizbollah attacks continued. He said: "This is an operation against Hizbollah and not Syria." Given that Mr Peres and General Shahak have a soft spoken style it was not immediately apparent that they were outlining a military operation in Lebanon as great as that in 1993 which left over 100 Lebanese dead. Air raids on Beirut were the first since the 1982-84 Israeli invasion.

The visit by Mr Peres was a mixture of a political leader visiting the front line and an election campaign. Much of the local population had moved south and soldiers with loud speakers were telling those who remained to get into bomb shelters, one of which was visited by the Prime Minister. When he stopped briefly by the burned out car, so completely incinerated that it was impossible to discover its original colour, he was heckled. One man shouted: "Peres, we want war." Another said: "Let [General Ariel] Sharon take care of it."

Remarkably, against all the evidence of previous Israeli actions in Lebanon, nobody seemed to doubt that massive use of force would bring Hizbollah to heel.



Fire power: An Israeli 155mm artillery piece in northern Israel fires into Lebanon

Photograph: Jim Hollander/Reuters

West fears harm to peace process

Agencies — Britain joined the United States and France in calling for restraint and condemned Hizbollah cross-border attacks which sparked the raids. Arab states attacked Israel, calling for an end to its attacks.

The White House urged Hizbollah to defuse escalating tensions in Lebanon and Israel. "There have been a number of actions by Hizbollah, which is making it very difficult to restore calm and stability in north Israel and south Lebanon," White House press secretary Mike McCurry said.

"We believe that the best thing that could happen is for the violence to subside and it's quite clear that the best way for that to happen is for the unnecessary provocations by Hizbollah to cease."

A Foreign Office spokesman in London said: "Pursuit of the peace process remains the priority and we know that Israel will gauge carefully its response and do all it can to avoid civilian casualties. When the peace process offers a non-violent way forward there can be absolutely no justification for Hizbollah actions."

To achieve a "just and lasting peace", France urged the application of United Nations resolution 425 which calls on Israel to leave southern Lebanon, for Lebanon to reassert sovereignty over its territory and for security to be restored to the border area between Israel and Lebanon. This was the message President Jacques Chirac took on his recent visit to southern Lebanon.

The Arab League condemned Israel's attacks and pledged its support for all measures taken by Lebanon to defend itself. "While condemning these aggressive practices that contradict international laws and norms, the Arab League expresses its absolute unity with the bravery of the Lebanese people," a statement said.

Familiar exodus of fear in a world that has gone mad

ROBERT FISK
Tyre

They left in their tens of thousands, the people of southern Lebanon, whey-faced with fear, many of the women in tears, crammed into old family cars with bedding on the roof and cooking utensils in the boot and blankets dangling from the windows. Israeli radio had given them just three hours to leave home or take the consequences, ordering the inhabitants of 32 villages on to the roads north before Israel's next blitz against the Hizbollah.

The Israelis had left it to their proxy "South Lebanon Army" militia to make the darker threats. "He who forewarns is excused," the SLA's Voice of the South radio announcer said at midday. There would be no consequences among those who opened fire after giving so clear a warning. At 3.30 pm the bombardment would begin, the radio said. Then it was postponed for two hours. And the thousands of Lebanese, trapped in endless jams of traffic on the narrow coastal road, sat sweating in their vehicles as

the whisper of jets moved through the sky above them.

The highway was familiar. I had driven through refugees down this same road in 1978 when the Israelis invaded Lebanon to "destroy terrorism". I had travelled past the refugees on the highway in 1982 when Israel again invaded to "destroy terrorism". In 1993, I had headed south past 300,000 refugees when the Israelis opened a bombardment of southern Lebanon to "destroy terrorism". Now here I was again, driving on to the pavement to pass the fearful refugees moving north in the other direction as Israel opened a new onslaught to "destroy terrorism". Had the world gone mad?

Some of the refugees — the same in many cases, no doubt, as those who had fled past me in previous years — seemed to think so. In every car, a radio was clasped to the driver's ear; they knew all about the Hizbollah's Katyusha attack on the Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona yesterday morning — itself retaliation for Israel's Thursday bombardment of Beirut — and they knew what to expect. You

could see them shaking their heads in disbelief.

Already the Iqlim al-Kharoub was under fire and the hills around Nabatieh. An Israeli jet was reported to have fired a missile into a town near Arnoun. And so the villages of the south, many of them old enough to appear in the annals of the Crusaders — Tibnin, Kafra, Yater, Bradchit, Khirbet Silm, Majd el-Silm, Haris — were depopulated.

Crossing south across the Litani river, I found the road almost empty. There were a few last refugees hobbling on foot, begging for lifts north, a clutch of Lebanese soldiers in their new American helmets — looking for all the world like US Marines in Bosnia — sitting on their armoured vehicles, staring skywards all the time, trying to catch sight of the insect-like jets as they flitted through the firmament; then the long Roman highway to Tyre, as empty as a railway track, ominously surveyed by a distant Israeli helicopter.

The city of Tyre was deserted, shattered, the sea breeze banging unattended shutters, the United Nations flag snap-

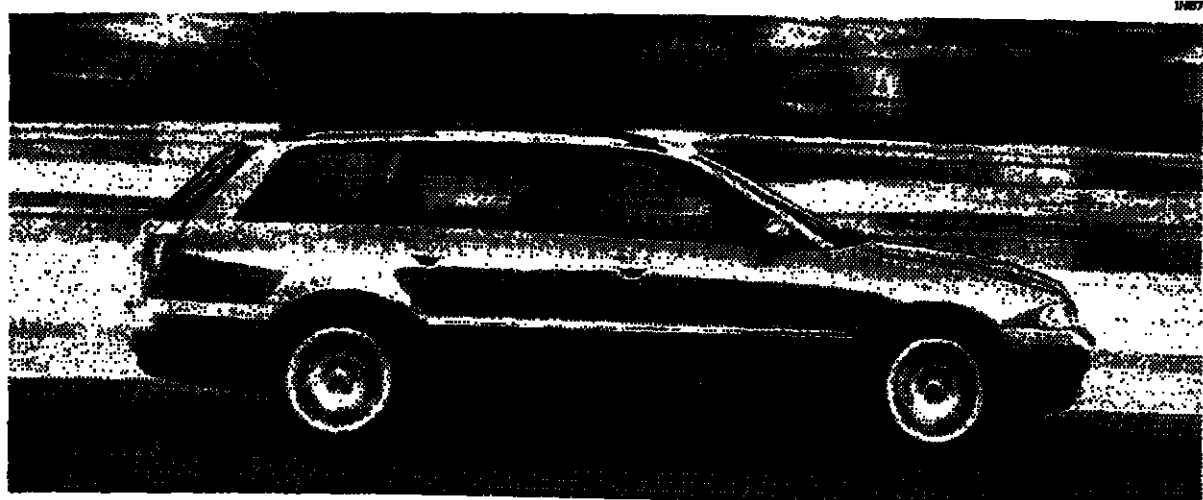
ping above the compound of the peace-keeping force on the sea front.

And inside, sheltering in a UN tent, I found one of southern Lebanon's saddest refugees. Mohamed Mera was 67 and had left his village of Kafra for Tyre to send his family of ten to Beirut for safety. Now he wanted to go back to his abandoned village, to die if necessary.

But no one would offer him a lift. "I stayed home in the Israeli bombardment of 1993 and was prepared to end my life there," he said. "Why should I leave now? Home is a good place to die."

And who did he blame for his predicament? I asked him. The prematurely old man with his white woollen cap and unshaven cheeks pointed his finger in the air. "What you know, I know," he said.

"All of us know. If it were up to us, there would be no war here. But the world is not in our hands." I did not have the heart to tell him what I just heard on my car radio: that the Israelis had just bombed the southern suburbs of Beirut — the very sanctuary to which he had sent his family.



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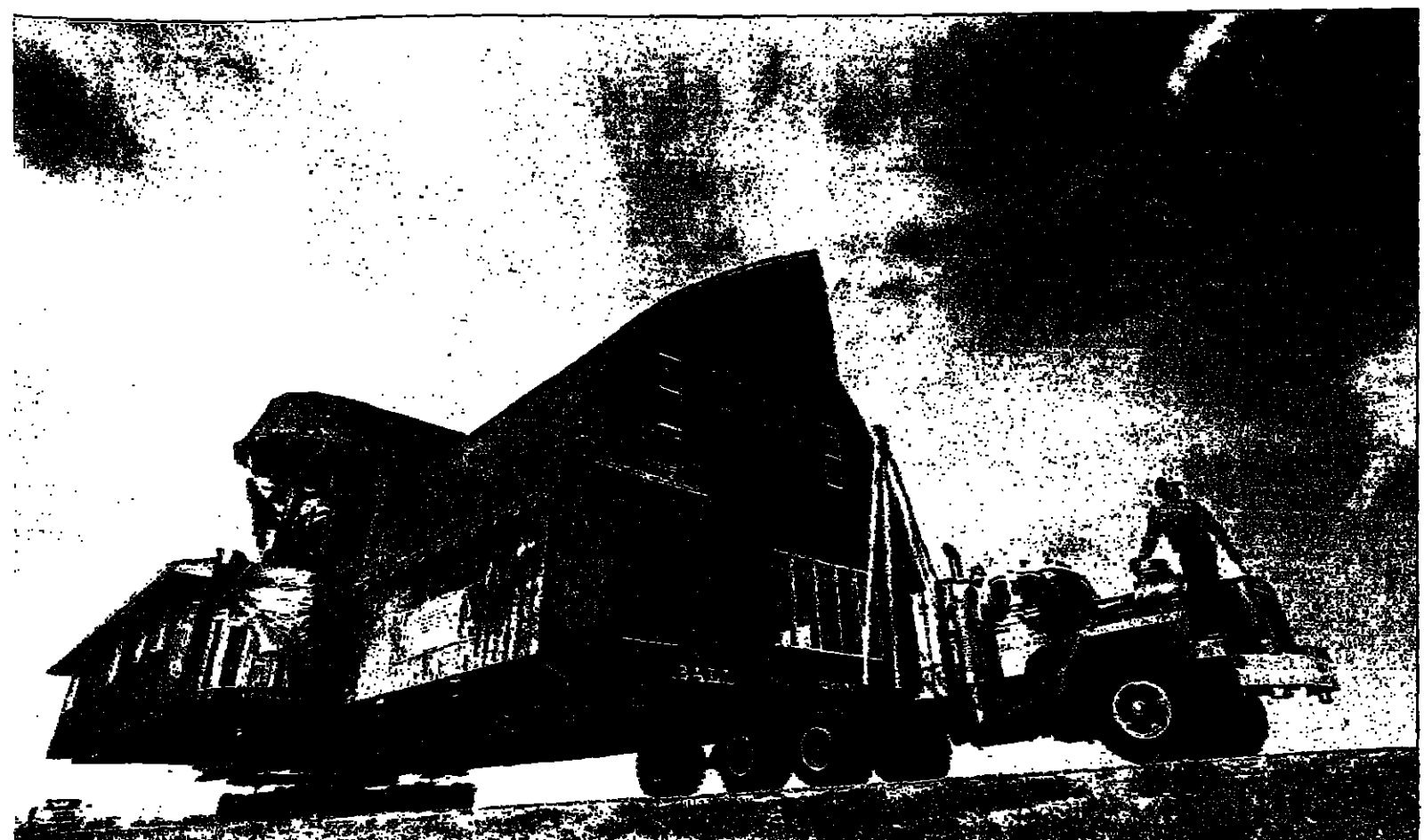
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On the move: A barn bought to house the Sherman family of seven being driven through Kansas from Goessel to McPherson Photograph: AP

Family reunion spells trouble for India's PM

New Delhi — At the height of the feud between the queen mother of Gwalior and her son, they lived walled off from each other in a colossal palace, which rises above the plains of central India, and never spoke. They inhabited rival political realms, too. She is a Hindu revivalist, while her son, Madhavrao, belonged to the secular Congress party. As the queen mother once remarked wistfully: "I should have let elephants trample on him when he was born."

The rift in the royal house of Gwalior has been one of the most captivating and longest-running sagas in Indian politics. Mother and son traded accusations of stealing family heir-

After 20 years' feuding, a mother and son are campaigning against Rao's government, writes Tim McGirk

looms. They padlocked doors in their 150-room Jai Vilas palace to keep each other away from the Persian rugs, the Belgian glass baubles and the Louis XVI furniture. Both are MPs; neither the son nor the mother lost a chance in parliament to sling insults at one other.

However, the Gwalior's dynastic quarrel may finally have ended. The mother and son's reunion, however, is bad news for Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister and Congress party leader, who inadvertently got the two back together again. The royal pair could harm Mr Rao's hopes of a Congress victory in Madhya Pradesh in the upcoming general elections.

The wily Prime Minister had gambled on revenge being a stronger trait among the Scindia warrior dynasty than forgiveness. He gambled wrong. In February, Mr Rao orchestrated a corruption scandal that tarred all of his leading challengers — both among the opposition leaders and inside Congress. Urbane, aristocratic and rich, Mr Scindia was seen by 74-year-old Mr Rao as a rising threat. Mr Scindia, along with several other cabinet ministers, was forced by the premier to resign for allegedly having accepted black money. He was also denied an election ticket.

Instead of glowering in his Gwalior citadel, Mr Scindia chose to fight against Mr Rao's manoeuvrings. He launched a new party, the Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress, on Monday and went on the campaign trail inside his ancestors' Gwalior kingdom, which at its peak encompassed 25,000 square miles. Although India's princes and nawabs were stripped of their titles, land and power after independence, Mr Scindia everywhere is given a maharajah's greeting: people bow and reverentially touch his feet.

The queen mother was gladdened by her son's revolt against Congress. "Mothers have traditionally forgiven errant sons," said the tiny but haughty Raj Mata. Besides, she said, "The Scindia name has been dishonoured [by the premier] and we must fight."

The family feud dated back to 1977 when the then premier, Indira Gandhi, assumed dictatorial powers and jailed the Raj Mata along with hundreds of other politicians and jour-

nalists. The queen mother's son fled to Nepal while his mother suffered in a cell. When she was released in 1980, the Raj Mata vowed to contest Mrs Gandhi's parliamentary seat. As one family friend explained: "Madhavrao knew that Mrs Gandhi was very vindictive. She could have made a lot of trouble for the Scindias, confiscating their wealth and land and putting them all back in jail."

To the queen mother's shame and dismay, her son joined the Congress party. He befriended Indira Gandhi even though she had tried to destroy his mother. It was around then that the Raj Mata said she wished her son had been trampled at birth by elephants.

Mr Scindia's mother is a



Rao: Unintentionally reunited Scindia family

leader in the right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party, and the BJP has now withdrawn its candidate for the Gwalior seat. Many of the state's Congress party leaders have snubbed the Prime Minister and are also pledging support for Mr Scindia. In Gwalior, the Congress party headquarters is virtually deserted, according to newspaper reports.

With general elections beginning on 27 April (2 and 7 May are also polling days), the Congress party's chances of winning a majority in parliament are looking dimmer. Not only is Mr Rao bound to lose the key state of Madhya Pradesh with the Gwalior royals fighting against him, but Congress strategists privately admit that the party is likely to suffer defeat in the Ganges plains of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as well as in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

Fresh fighting speeds exodus from Liberia

NYENATI ALLISON
Associated Press

Monrovia — Government troops, rebels and thieves exchanged heavy weapons fire on the streets of Liberia's seaside capital yesterday, speeding the country's descent into chaos.

The United Nations announced it would attempt to get nearly 100 of its workers out of the capital by boat. A US spokesman said a British merchant ship was offshore and would soon join the military operations.

Government troops resumed shelling of the military barracks where thousands of supporters of the warlord Roosevelt Johnson are holed up. Large explosions were heard throughout the city.

Witnesses said two children were killed and 17 people were wounded by mortar fire at the barracks yesterday morning. Overnight shelling killed seven people in a barracks church.

Government troops — many of whom are former rebels brought into the military when a peace accord was reached last year — were reported ransacking and taking over houses.

"Nowhere is safe, not even your bathroom," said Martha Schewe, a nurse at the military hospital who fled to the Mamba Point Hotel, where 500 people were holed up.

More than 900 people had been evacuated by US military helicopters by yesterday morning, after a day of looting and fighting between rival rebels and peace-keepers who appeared to join in the looting on Thursday.

Up to 20,000 people, including foreign diplomats, missionaries and Liberians, have sought refuge in the embassy compound and UN offices since fighting broke out between rebels and government troops last Saturday.

A spokesman for the peace-keeping troops said the Ghanaian President, Jerry Rawlings, had arrived with a diplomatic delegation from members of the Economic Community of West African States to help mediate a potential ceasefire.

The violence has taken its toll on Monrovia. Food and medicine are scarce and residents are desperate.

"Lord, please help us out of this madness," said Matina Jones, a housewife. "Your children are dying."



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EU puts budget powers on agenda

SARAH HELM
Verona

Radical new plans which could open the way for a common European fiscal policy will be discussed today by European finance ministers as part of a new drive to create a single currency.

The plans, which would effectively subject national budget planning to greater joint EU decision-making, are certain to fuel British fears that the single currency would undermine sovereignty. The aim is to make EU countries inside and outside monetary union keep their spending under control, so that the single currency remains stable and keeps its value.

Yves Thibault de Silguy, the EU commissioner for monetary affairs, said the intention of the programme is to make countries meet the economic conver-

would be drawn up for countries seeking to meet the Maastricht rules in order to qualify for monetary union, and another set would be drawn up for those countries already inside EMU.

Rules for economic convergence already exist under the treaty, which also includes provision for sanctions. But Mr de Silguy suggested yesterday that support was now growing for a far tighter programme of "automatic" rules and penalties to encourage all countries to keep to the rules, particularly on budget deficits.

Mr de Silguy spoke of a new "stability programme". The programme, he said, would involve "auto-correctional" budgetary measures. He also floated the idea of a new "multilateral surveillance system" for EU economies which might be operated by the European Commission.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, was already expecting to do battle in Verona over EU moves to encourage Britain to join a new exchange rate mechanism in the run up to monetary union. As news of the new "stability programme" emerged it seemed certain that Mr Clarke will now have to defend another flank, with national powers over fiscal and monetary matters both under assault.

Signs that the EU might be moving towards developing a common fiscal policy have been slowly emerging in recent months. There has been growing concern about how to bring countries into line in the run up to monetary union. But concern has also focused on how to force countries which do join to continue to obey the convergence rules.

In November Theo Waigel, the German finance minister, proposed a "stability pact", threatening fines for countries which join the single currency if they then failed to maintain the Maastricht criteria. The "stability programme" appears to have grown out of this plan.

The Commission appeared wary yesterday of giving too much detail of the plan, which officials acknowledge would be viewed as highly controversial in Britain and some other member states. "We are not drawing a new scheme to tell Britain what taxes to level," said one Commission official. "We are not setting out an economic blueprint for the rest of time."



Yves Thibault de Silguy:
Peer group pressure

gence rules set out in the Maastricht treaty. He spoke as finance ministers gathered for an informal meeting in Verona.

Mr de Silguy outlined a system under which finance ministers might in future have to submit their taxing and public spending plans to their European partners for agreement, should their economies appear to be running into trouble. If the plans were not deemed to be tough enough to keep the national budget in line, the EU council might propose alternatives. In effect, he said the council would become a "council of stability".

"It would be up to the council to evaluate progress," said the commissioner. Mr de Silguy spoke of the need for "peer group pressure" to keep countries on the right track.

One set of stricter new rules

Hoaxed: Canadians pay £60,000 after mother's tragic TV cancer appeal



Out of the shadows: Donna Mercier in silhouette on television and (right) leaving a Toronto police station after being charged Photographs: AP

Tale of the victim who never was

DAVID CRARY
Associated Press

Toronto — It was a heart-breaking tale that moved Canadians nationwide: a young, single mother, dying of cancer, victimized by a purse snatcher.

Yesterday, after a week-long outpouring of generosity, it turned out that the public had been the victims of a hoax.

Toronto police, whose poignant account of the woman's story prompted Canadians to send her \$112,000 (£60,000) in gifts, announced that Donna Mercier, 27, had been charged with public mischief. She declined to speak to

reporters when released from custody, but her lawyer, Paul Layfsky, said the charge related to reporting a crime that allegedly did not occur. Ms Layfsky said she would plead innocence.

Further details of the case were due to be released yesterday. But the arrest followed media disclosures over the past two days that began to eat away at what had seemed to be one of the most heart-warming stories in Canada this year.

It turned out that Mercier did not have cancer. Police said she had a kidney ailment instead, and there were conflicting reports about its seriousness.

Then the *Toronto Star* reported that Mercier was convicted of public mischief in 1987 after claiming she had been raped by two men. She later admitted that she had lied and pleaded guilty to the mischief charge.

On Wednesday, police froze the bank account set up for the woman and stepped up an investigation into her claims. Mercier, whose name was not disclosed until Wednesday, became the object of national attention on 4 April when police reported a purse-snatching from a cancer-stricken single mother. Police said she had lost money, identification and a bus ticket for her son, so he

could be with relatives after her death.

Police said the woman never asked for help or money, and had to be persuaded to let them go public with the story of the theft in the hope that publicity would lead to recovery of her purse.

When the story was reported on television and in newspapers, donations and offers of help flowed in. A bank account was opened for the woman, who asked not to be identified because she said she had recently left an abusive relationship.

As the donations piled up, she appeared at a news conference, tearfully thanking her

donors and asking that they stop sending money. "I wish I could put everyone inside my heart, so they would know how thankful I am," she said. But after her darkened silhouette was shown on television, anonymous callers telephoned police and the media, saying they recognized her and disputing her story.

Police Chief David Boothby said the outpouring of generosity still showed Toronto "was a real, caring city." Another official said that if it was proved the story was a hoax, police department would seek some other "worthwhile, fully accountable" destination for the donations.

Cautious meat-eaters opt for 'le vegiburger'

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

"It's vegetarian," the waiter said, saying the word very slowly, syllable by syllable. "That means it's got no meat in it. Is that what you want, madame?" This was the less than enthusiastic sales pitch for the *le vegiburger*, the new departure for Hippopotamus, the French restaurant chain famous for its charcoal-grilled meat.

The arrival of the *le vegiburger* at Hippopotamus was planned, the management says, long before the beef scare. But its launch was brought forward a couple of weeks, expanding the restaurant's non-beef options, and the printed menu does not yet recognise the fact. I scanned it several times before establishing that the *le vegiburger* merited only a discreet notice on the table, listing the alternatives to beef: leg of lamb, grilled pork, *vegiburger*, salad Nicoise, salmon.

Hippopotamus says that it introduced the non-meat burger to cater for what seemed a growing number of mainly younger customers who ordered a salad or a combination plate, then proceeded to pick out the bits of meat and leave them tidily on the side. Even at Hippopotamus, which advertises itself as a "meat lovers' haven", vegetarianism was starting to be noticed.

The trend was small but, in a country where a meal is often not considered a meal without a decent piece of meat, significant. According to official statistics, meat consumption in France declined by almost 3 per cent in 1994, an unprecedented fall.

Now, the beef crisis is pushing vegetarianism further into respectability. It commands a new interest, if not respect. Over the past two weeks, as French ministers, meat wholesalers and butchers have been

trying to talk up the languishing beef market, the few vegetarian restaurants in Paris and other big cities have registered a 30 per cent increase in custom. Newspapers and magazines have started printing vegetarian recipes. People are talking about "alternatives".

At Hippopotamus, though, the waiters and customers seem far from convinced. Once identified and selected, *le vegiburger*

is treated as honorary meat. "Rare or medium?" the waiter asked. "Sauce?"

I stopped him. "What sort of sauce comes with a *vegiburger*?" "Any of the usual ones: béarnaise, shallot, black pepper..." When it arrived, "medium", the *vegiburger* was chargrilled, slightly piquant, with a discernible nut content, soya, some tomato perhaps — but still an unfamiliar presence between the

two halves of a French sesame bun.

Mine was the only *vegiburger* in sight in the crowded restaurant. To my left a couple ordered plates of beef carpaccio; two beef tartars arrived further down; three hamburgers (rare) behind me, and two large steaks (extra rare) to the right. Vegetarian awareness may be growing, slowly. But meat-eating is not yet out of fashion.

Walesa gets presidential pension

ADRIAN BRIDGE
Central Europe Correspondent

The former Polish President Lech Walesa's dramatic return to his old job as an electrician has ended before it really got started with news yesterday that he is to receive a pension of \$2,600 (£1,700) a month.

After fierce debate, MPs decided overwhelmingly that Mr Walesa's services to the state deserved to be recognised — as did those of two other previous presidents: Wojciech Jaruzelski, the country's last communist leader, and Kyszard Kaczorowski, the last leader of the Polish government-in-exile set up in London during the war.

Mr Walesa, who was narrowly defeated in November's presidential election by the former communist Aleksander Kwasniewski, had complained that no provision had been made for him after he handed over office at the end of last year.

To underline the point, he announced his intention to take up his old job as an electrician at the Gdansk shipyard where he founded the Solidarity trade union and where his former bosses said they would be delighted to have him back.

In a highly-publicised return to the yard earlier this month, Mr Walesa said he needed the \$260 a month electrician's pay in order to make ends meet. Part of the reason for the delay in awarding the pension was due to misgivings many MPs felt making a similar provision for Mr Jaruzelski, who declared martial law in the country in 1980. But Mr Jaruzelski said yesterday that he would not collect his presidential pension as he was already getting one as a retired army general.

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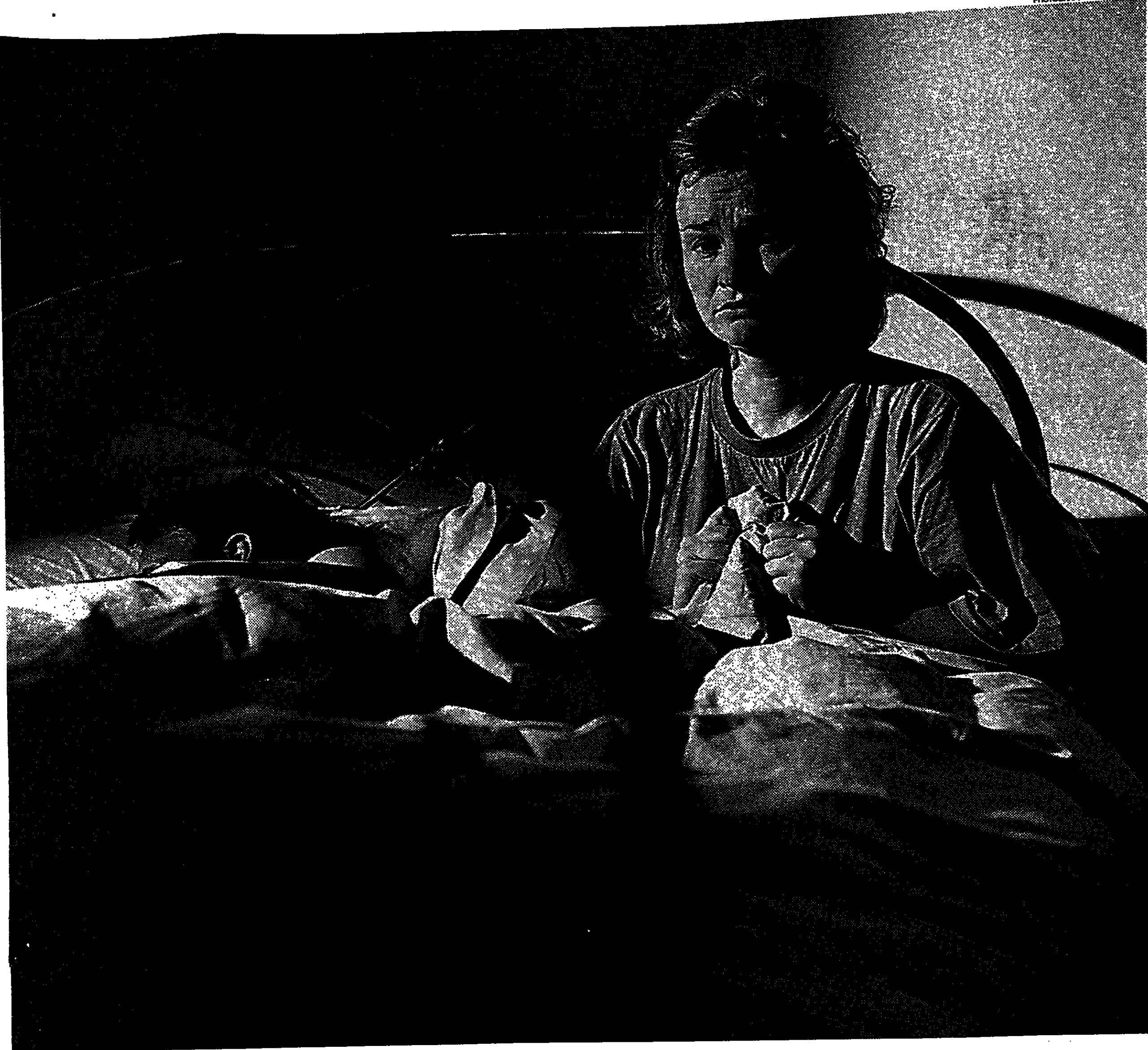
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INSIDE



It's funny how priorities change. I kept waiting for America to prefer the unpredictability of city centre shopping and small shopkeepers. But since Adam, was born in August, I have seen things different.

THE STORY
OF THE
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Weekend

The Independent

هذه من الابرار

On the trail of the egg thieves

One man's battle to protect the nest of the peregrine falcon page 13

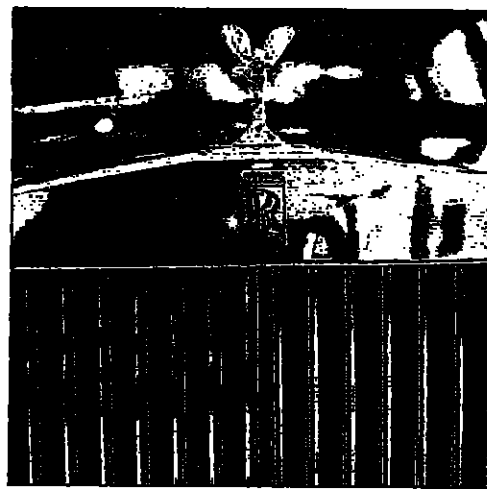
INSIDE STORIES



4 It's funny how your priorities change. A year ago I kept well away from American-style malls, preferring the unpredictability of the city centre with its market and small shops, its buskers and 'Big Issue' sellers. But since my son, Adam, was born last August, I have started to see things differently

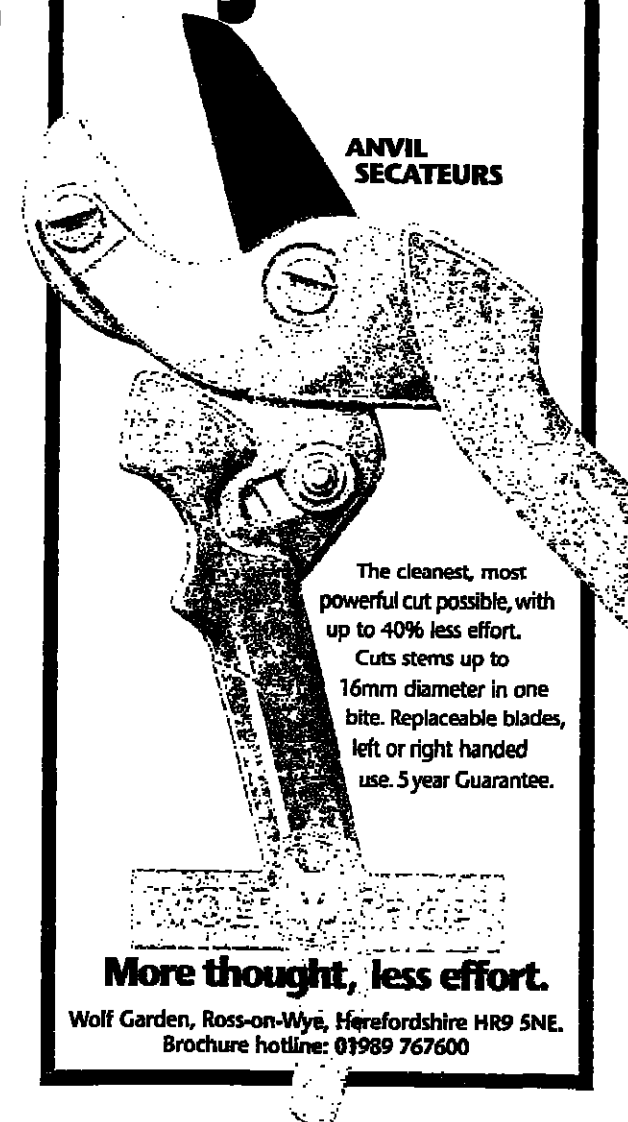


8 One of the greatest mysteries of the Thatcher years was how the PM's husband managed to avoid the sarcastic opprobrium that is routinely heaped onto female political consorts. No one ever suggested Denis was pulling the strings. He never seemed anything more than a hen-pecked old fogey



11 'Ritch bitch,' he said. And all my friend was doing was filling her £6,995 car at a petrol station in Derby. And, no, she was not dressed in mink, nor even in Prada. This friend is neither rich nor a bitch. But, for her sins, she does drive a two-tone second-hand Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow

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picture story



The horizons of Soweto children rarely stretch beyond the tumbledown shacks that scatter their landscape. Few go to school, but are less likely to commit street crime or fall victim to it as a result of Trans-Sizwe. This 400-strong security firm, set up in 1993 to meet the demand for law-enforcement from businesses, shopping centres and stations, has a widespread presence in the camps, which are regarded by the state police as no-go areas

SQUATTERS OF SOWETO

The end of apartheid brought hope to the millions living in the shanty towns of South Africa. But the problems of poverty, social unrest and crime have continued. Emma Boam visited Chris Han's squatter camp in Soweto to record living conditions and found that since the setting up of Trans-Sizwe, a private security firm comprising many former ANC guerillas, the quality of life has slowly started to improve



Three members of Trans-Sizwe, which comprises former members of the ANC, veterans from the Angolan war and ex-prisoners. All are highly trained in secret bunkers in Soweto



Despite the temporary nature of their accommodation, the squatters are keen to mark out their territory to secure ownership and deter burglars



Weapons collected from youths who are stopped and searched at Cliptown station, which is on the main-line through Soweto



Two common sights: (above) animals are often kept for a spot of subsistence farming, while (right), despite or perhaps because of the poverty, families stay close-knit. Here, a boy stands between his mother and grandmother



• • • • •

John 10150

Space: the final frontier

Deborah Warner is one of our leading theatre directors, but she doesn't like working in theatres. She'd rather stage 'The Waste Land' down a lift shaft than at the National any day. By Paul Taylor. Photographs by Neil Libbert



Above: Deborah Warner, frustrated by the English insistence on subsidising buildings rather than people. Left: Fiona Shaw on the set of *The Waste Land*, Paris

If there's one thing Deborah Warner finds fatally limiting, it's people "who think they know the shape of theatre". Fixed ideas on either the sort of spaces theatre is permitted to inhabit or the forms it is allowed to take are abhorrent to her. This may account for why she is to be found at the moment travelling around the world – Paris, Montreal, Toronto, Milan – with her production of TS Eliot's *The Waste Land*, a text which was very much not written as a theatre piece and which is performed by Fiona Shaw in non-theatrical sites selected by Warner for their atmospheric reaction with this great modernist poem and its famous "heap of broken images".

The evocative power of buildings seems to have become an obsession with the multi-award-winning 36-year-old director. One of the strangest and most memorable successes of last year's LIFT festival, for example, was Warner's *St Pancras Project*, which treated the grand, wrecked, abandoned interior of Gilbert Scott's Victorian Gothic station hotel as a sort of "found poem" on the theme of suspension between two lives. Audience members, if so they could still be called, were sent individually through it on a mapped-out "fantastical walk". Inverting normal theatrical convention, where the building houses a communally shared experience, the building in this case constituted the experience, as vestigial ghosts of its former existence stirred, flitted, and half-materialised at the corner of your eye, making you feel like Alice alone in a serially haunting dream.

If Warner were to write a book about her adventures and misadventures searching out locations for *The Waste Land*, "Let's do the show right here!" would make a neatly ironic title. In Brussels, where the piece originated, she found an abandoned department store "which had a marvellous lift-well down the middle. We were going to put Fiona at the bottom of the well, with the audience looking down. It would have been a terrific spatial relationship." Permission fell through, though, as it did for putting Shaw in one of the booths in the mission-control-like new conference chambers of the European Parliament, with the audience in the green armchairs receiving the piece through translation headphones. The Parliament didn't much care for the title of the work, while Neil Kinnock's office, to which she

appealed, said: "Now, if it had been a Welsh poem, there would have been no problem."

Boom towns – "where everything has just been turned into a new night-club" – are particularly tricky. When Warner finally found the perfect deserted, derelict spot in Toronto, it turned out that the ground on which the tin hut in question stood was poisoned ("I quite liked that"). But if, from the artistic perspective, this merely enhanced the setting's charm and relevance to a poem about spiritual sterility, it also, from the authorities' point of view, ruled it out. Each city, though, has, finally, come up with the goods. In Dublin, for example, *The Waste Land* was staged at an abandoned English fort atop a hill in Phoenix Park in the low, dome-ceilinged 18th-century bunkers where they kept the gunpowder. "The space was abstract," says Warner: "it was almost like walking into someone's brain."

I caught up with the production a fortnight ago in Paris, where Shaw performed the poem in the intimate Amphithéâtre de Morphologie, where students take life-drawing classes at the Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts. Paris was a good spot on the itinerary at which to intersect with this show and not just because, by now, the actress has developed a deep, virtuosic inwardness with the material or because the French capital – where Warner and Shaw ("le tandem-anglais") made the front page of *Le Monde* in January when the National's *Richard II* (with Shaw as king) hit town – houses a wildly appreciative audience for this English director's work (she's been made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres). More tellingly, Paris has also emerged as an alternative source of subsidy for her imagination.

Two years ago, Warner's staging of Samuel Beckett's *Footfalls* at the Garrick Theatre was the subject of scandal, when her reallocation of some of the lines and her deviation from the pedantic dead letter, if not the spirit, of the play's stage directions caused the Beckett Estate to issue a *fama* on the projected European tour and TV version. One little noticed irony of the affair is that this conscious attempt to break the pattern of West End theatre-going (the Garrick interior dislocatingly transformed; the show, lasting an intense 20 minutes, performed twice nightly at £4 a ticket) was produced by MC 93 Bobigny, a generously funded French theatre in

a very big outer circle borough of Paris that happens to be run by the Communists. (The same outfit sponsored the French runs of *Richard II*, to the tune of £260,000, and of *The Waste Land*.) Among Warner's plans for the coming year are a production of either *Miss Julie* or *A Doll's House* at the Odéon with Isabelle Huppert in the leading role. At an enigmatic point in English theatre's fortunes – with Trevor Nunn, the surprise artistic director designate of the National, yet to disclose his hand – Paris offers a revealing perspective from which to look at a key young English director's relationship with her native theatre and the challenges she faces in securing imaginative freedom.

There was a period recently of about two years when Warner, one of the National's associates, significantly produced no work on the South Bank. She has grown much fonder of the place of late – particularly since Richard Eyre, whom she describes as a "pretty glorious godfather", gave his consent to her dream of directing Fiona Shaw as Richard II. You can sense, though, her frustration at the English tradition of subsidising buildings rather than people, with the result that the buildings can end up running the people, who then don't end up running the art: "If I were French, I would be funded as an individual." The National Theatre is prepared to subsidise one's imagination, she points out, "as long as one's imagination is contained within the walls of the National Theatre".

The sticking point, for her, is that, unlike Bobigny (with its infinitely adaptable, 900-seater empty box of a main house) or the Berlin Schaubühne (with its three flexibly interconnecting hangar-like expanses), the National has "no versatile space of scale", the Cottlesloe, the South Bank bunker's only flexible house, being limited by its 400-seat capacity. She did once try to make a Beckett piece in the big and rather beautiful paint-frame there, but the Borough of Lambeth wouldn't grant a licence. The architectural limitations of the National are something she's been brooding on while pondering a possible production of *As You Like It*, a work which offers the opportunity for magical play with changing dimensions on the move from the court to the Forest of Arden.

Bobigny could certainly co-produce with, say, Frankfurt the kind of vision of the piece she aspires to achieve. The only equivalent space

it could transfer to in London, she argues, is the Riverside Studios (where her celebrated, open-heart surgery RSC production of *Electra* was remounted). But the Riverside doesn't have the necessary producing money and the National can't afford to take on umbrella projects. The idea of having to go abroad to do a big Shakespeare play with a large group of English actors, and not being able to bring it home, she finds a dismaying prospect; and if she were to secure the foreign money to do so, "it would be a terribly, terribly unbalanced act. It means that the rest of Europe would be subsidising the National to put a show on outside itself."

It is known that the Royal Court's Stephen Daldry, regarded as one of the main contenders for the top job at the National, sounded Warner out by phone. All she will say of what passed between them is that she urged him to press ahead. It's mouth-watering to imagine what might have come from the combination of the daring and maverick producing skills of Daldry (to whom effecting major theatrical face-lifts and charming money from stone seem to come as easily as breathing) and Warner's pure, radical vision of what theatre might be. The hope is that Trevor Nunn, who has little to prove in the directing stakes, will throw his creative energies into the production side. Were he to offer Warner a permanent role at his National, she would consider it very carefully – but, she tells me, "the conversation would have to be the one we've just had".

Her staging of *Waste Land* demonstrates in abundance a strength detectable in Warner's work since the early Kick Theatre Shakespearean she directed in her twenties: an ability to illuminate the complex or the rhetorically puzzling by cutting straight to the heart of the human emotion behind it. This is evident here from the moment when Fiona Shaw steps through a tall, narrow door into the spookily lit chamber where the arms of two straining classical statues of naked men throw arches of black shadow on the back wall. Hesitating at the threshold, she delivers that famous first line, "April is the cruellest month", not as some lapidary, impersonal statement, but with the flouncing shrug and raised-eyes manner of some society preacher announcing that "Ascot is the biggest bore".

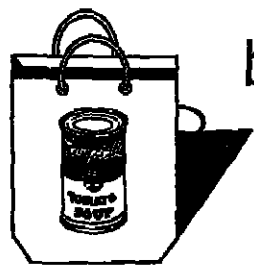
So surprising you almost laugh out loud, yet

also so penetrating, in its affected weariness and hint of inverted commas. It thrusts you straight into the world of the poem which dramatises spiritual drought, a state in which it is perfectly possible to be On-so-knowing about cultural reference points, while desperately lacking a living connection with any culture.

The original intention, given the setting, had been to present Shaw as a model who suddenly voices, after hours, the thoughts that had run through her brain during the enforced silence of the working day. That idea is left implicit, though, in a performance that dazzlingly encompasses the multiple identities in Eliot's poem. Sometimes, she achieves these shifts in convulsive outbursts or lightning involuntary switches of attention, as though she were the medium through which these voices were roughly forcing their way out. Her cropped hair and bony androgynous look are perfect for the timeless, suffering and ambiguous presence of Tiresias, the blind prophet who has been both genders and through whose eyes we see the squalid, futile sex that emphasises the isolation in this wasteland. Warner had worried, at first, about whether you could take people so swiftly on such a cryptic journey through such difficult terrain. The inference she has drawn from the emotional impact it unfailingly makes is of "how slowly audiences are usually taken through things".

At some as yet unspecified date, the production will end its life in London, the city which the poem makes the paradigm of all cities and whose commuters ("The crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many / I had not thought death had undone so many") are likened to Dante's spiritual dead in the *Inferno*. The vast chambers of the new British Library, before the books are put in, is one of the sites, permission permitting, that Warner has earmarked as a possible space for the London staging. Were this to coincide with a projected revival of the *St Pancras Project* in July, it would mean that Warner was slowly colonising King's Cross. She jokes that she should set up a concurrent production in the Red Light district ("You could have the critics cruising by in cars. Do you know any cruisers...?") and I suggest that she would then have become to this patch of non-theatre land what Bill Kenwright, no less, is to Shaftesbury Avenue. A distinctly piquant but not untypical piece of frontier-shifting.

shopping



bazaar

Checkout Harrods

What is it? A small Knightsbridge republic, Harrods' handsome Victorian buildings stretch over four acres of prime shopping turf. The store began life as a corner shop, but expanded rapidly, its posh moniker becoming a by-word for luxury. Now one of London's top tourist magnets, rarefied opulence is lost in a blizzard of green and gold gift merchandising.

Customers? In its heyday, Oscar Wilde and Lily Langtree ran tabs here. These days you're more likely to be buffeted by German and American tourists.

Services: Harrods promised a "cradle to grave" package with a nursery and undertaking service. The store still has a bank, pub, and interior design studio. And you can stash that troublesome fur in the store's subterranean vault.

What To Buy? If you've got the smackers, the sky's the limit: Bronze Egyptian torch holders, a snip at £5.495, perfect for that Kubla Khan look. The beautifully tiled foodhall stocks 1,200 wines and 350 cheeses, as well as fashionable safari food like Kangaroo steak (£19.80/kg) or Ostrich slicing sausage with pistachios (£2/100g).

What Not To buy? Oysters for two at a tiny bar in the foodhall. At £100 these standard platters aren't exactly a bargain and the pressing crowds are enough to give the most determined snob indigestion.

Good thing

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Rid your rooms of stale cigarette smoke or any other nasty smells with Green & Pleasant's stylish terracotta burner. Each conical lamp comes with a box of powdered Cade, a mystical substance which smells of juniper and rosemary and which, legend has it, Merlin used to ward off witches. Refill packs cost £3.95.

Green & Pleasant (0181-563 2349 for mail order).

Mad thing

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Total stress relief in a big stick. Rainsticks were originally intended as percussive ceremonial instruments and originated in South America. But the soothing, and frankly addictive sound of heavy rain they create has become a popular alternative to worry beads, nail biting and dog kicking as forms of stress relief. The dried cactus sticks come from Chile and exactly how they are made remains a mystery.

Takes from the Earth (0171 720 4990).



Close call: Tony and baby test the facilities

What's a man to do with a wet nappy?

One man and his baby go shopping in Cambridge. Natural it may be, simple it isn't. By Tony Kelly

I used to think shopping was easy - an hour on the pay-and-display and a quick dash from shop to shop. But since my son, Adam, was born last August I have started to see things differently. As any parent will know, a trip to the shops with a baby can soon turn into an obstacle course as you try to manoeuvre a push-chair up narrow steps and through heavy, unwilling doors. Becoming a parent certainly opens your eyes to the problems faced by people in wheelchairs.

Babies have other needs too - they have to be fed and changed regularly. For women this means finding somewhere to breast-feed in privacy and warmth; for men it means a search for a changing-room that is not women-only. You start to plan your shopping trips, not according to what you want to buy but to where the best facilities are. So the week before Easter Adam and I set out for Cambridge (our nearest large town) on a highly unscientific survey to discover which shops were the most father- and baby-friendly.

We started in Woolworths, chock-a-block with people buying Easter eggs. At eight months Adam is too young for chocolate so I decided to look at the toys on the first floor. In trying to get the push-chair upstairs we encountered a forbidding notice: "Under no circumstances may customers use the lifts without a member of staff". Why not, I asked the attendant once I had managed to locate

her. Apparently it's because the lift goes to the store room as well. Wouldn't it be easier simply to lock the store room and not make customers feel such a nuisance?

Boots is always high on the shopping list these days - nappies, baby food, cotton wool. I bought some toothpaste and decided to investigate the arrangements for parents with babies in tow. "Fathers are welcome to use this facility," said a note on the door of the Mother and Baby Room. "Before entering please check with a member of the Baby Department." A quick sniff revealed no urgent need, so rather than disturb a breastfeeding mum purely in the interests of research I moved on.

Robert Sayle is the Cambridge branch of John Lewis, the co-operative department store known for its enlightened approach. For weeks I had been planning to buy a new wok, and with Adam heavily into pureed vegetables we needed a new liquidiser as well. The kitchen department is in the basement, and when I found three difficult flights of stairs but no lift I asked an assistant what I should do. "The building is too old to take a lift," she said. "I'll give you a hand down the stairs if you like. Or you can leave the baby behind the counter, or leave the chair and take the baby." An impressive range of choices, and helpful personal attention. But I wasn't going to leave my baby with a stranger and I didn't feel like carrying a baby, a liquidiser and a wok.

By now nature was calling us both so we headed for the public toilets beside the library. The baby-changing facilities were in the Ladies' so I asked the attendant in the gents' how I could use them. "You can't," was his blunt reply "but you could try the disabled toilet at the bus station." When I got there the disabled loo was locked and you needed a RADAR key (issued to registered disabled people) to get in. Once again there was a changing-room inside the Ladies', but despite a notice warning of a male cleaner in attendance I didn't feel like charging in to investigate.

I'd never been to a McDonalds but I'd heard you could change your baby there. This being Cambridge, where there was long resistance to the very idea of a McDonalds, it has a wood-panelled shop front and fake Gothic pillars inside. Baby-changing was advertised as being inside the disabled toilet, but the door was locked, there was no-one around and since I had no intention of buying a BigMac and fries I didn't want to draw attention to myself. Increasingly desperate, we sneaked away.

Around the corner we found what we wanted. Eaden Lilley is a department store with an Italianate café on the top floor. Dad was ready for a cup of tea, Adam was ready for a clean nappy and this seemed just the place. At last, a baby-changing room for mums or dads, separate from the toilets, with a large changing-mat and rolls of clean

paper. But why, oh why, do you have to go down some steps to reach it?

Back in the sun, Adam was getting thirsty and fortunately we had arranged to meet his mother in the Grafton Centre. It's funny how your priorities change. A year ago I kept well away from this American-style mall, preferring the unpredictability of the city centre with its market and small shops, its buskers and Big Issue sellers, sunshine and rain. But now child-friendliness is what matters and the Grafton Centre is as friendly as you can get: automatic doors, ramps instead of steps, and parent-and-baby rooms in every shop from BHS and Debenhams to the Early Learning Centre. Plus, of course, no cars.

Inevitably, there is a Mothercare. If any shop should be baby-friendly it is this one - and despite the name, it is father-friendly too. Mother disappeared into the "mummy's room" to feed Adam in peace; then father took him into the large, lockable "parent's room" with its changing-mat, bottle-warmer, and a toilet which solves the eternal problem (for women especially) of how to squeeze a push-chair into a tiny cubicle.

This seems the perfect answer for both mums and dads, one that respects the rights of women to breast-feed in private and of men to go shopping with their babies. My only complaint is that you have to put up with a talking tree and a series of infuriating jingles to get there.

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Merran Fane believed in fairies. She went into business with them and together they made a fortune

By Clive Fewins



Believer: Merran Fane and (inset) a sample of stock

Photos: John Lawrence

Merran Fane believed in Father Christmas until she was 14. She still believes in fairies. It is a belief that has strengthened in the past two-and-a-half years, as she has seen the profits of her business. The Faerie Shop, grow and grow.

"When we started the business friends thought we were mad. I think the bank manager gave it a few months," said Merran, an effervescent Australian mother of four.

After a slow start the shop, tucked away in a yard off the High Street in Marlborough, Wiltshire, made what Merran describes as "staggering profits" in its first year. "People now come from all over the country for our fairy costumes, dolls, fairy cakes, pictures, fairy night-lights, model fairies, stationery, cards, jewellery, purses — there are about 150 lines in all.

"For the present we have decided against another branch but we have licensed the name to a couple in Truro who are great fairy people and we are acting as consultants."

Merran started the shop when it became increasingly hard for her husband Andrew, to support the family from his business as a paper conservator, specialising in restoring watercolours. They chose Marlborough because it was the nearest town to their home.

"The idea came from my mother, who happened to mention that there are at least 20 fairy shops in Australia. I had never done any retailing before but I thought it would be a good idea to start Britain's first fairy shop."

The shop has two floors. The first floor is a gallery that encircles the building. Most of the fairy pictures are displayed here. Classic fairy artists like Cecily Mary Barker, Arthur Rackham and Molly Brett loom large. This floor also houses the most unusual feature of the shop — the fairy bower, with a fairy ring of red and white-spotted "roadstool" cushions on the floor, and walls and ceiling decorated with mystical woodland scenes. Here the Fairy Queen can be hired to tell stories at birthday parties or on other special occasions.

"The children sit entranced. The boys, up to the age of about 10, go in sceptical and come out gobsmacked," said Merran. "The smaller ones often ask if they can stay the night, but point out that fairies get very mischievous in the dark and start scattering about the fairy dust that is all over the shop as well as getting up to all sorts of other naughty tricks."

There may be naughty fairies but there are no evil fairies at The Faerie Shop. "I prefer to avoid the dark side. All is light and bright and cheerful here," Merran said. "I try to make it

a place that is uplifting and upbeat, where people come to cheer up. The other day a lady came in who had just left her dog with the vet for an operation. She just wanted to relax and have a chat."

If by any chance you feel on less than effervescent form on entering the shop you will be unable to restrain yourself from responding in some way to the shocking pink and purples in the tulle fairy dresses in the window, the racks of sparkling fairy shoes, the large polystyrene Pegasus welcoming you by the door or the decor of stars and moons with fairies and castles in cloudy landscapes.

Those that respond positively ascend the magic staircase to view the gallery and fairy bower. It consists of a steel spiral swathed in branches of the contorted willow tree (*salix contorta*) for which the Fanes advertised in a local newspaper, before Andrew went out with a saw to the garden of the respondent.

"Most of the purchases are by adults for children," Merran said. "However we have our fair share of adult believers, like the lady from Hampshire who recently spent three hours in the shop and left having signed a cheque for £650."

"Of course we do get a handful of customers who want to fall about laughing over it all, but I usually manage to take them down a differ-

ent path," Merran said. "We also get some gay couples who like the masks and the jewellery. They also love the ornaments we sell."

"However to me the most important thing is that by bringing back the fairies into people's lives we are fulfilling a need. As a little girl I found the world of Disney was magic. Today the whole idea has been merchandised and pummeled to death."

"We are trying to recreate this sense of childhood magic and mystery. I think this is tremendously important in an age of which poor little innocents are so often bombarded with violence and the horrors of war."

"We feel there is a need for shops like this right across Britain in order to put a sense of wonderment back into the lives of modern children. We looked at London but it was too expensive. Franchising is not the answer either. The shop is too much a projection of my own character. You can't put that into a franchising manual."

"Besides this is now more than a business. I can't have anybody running a branch of The Faerie Shop. It is too much of a responsibility."

The Faerie Shop, 22 Hughenden Yard, High Street, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1LT. Tel: 01672 515995. For a free mail order catalogue, tel 01672 871001.

The thing about Travel Accessories

You're in an airport. It doesn't really matter which airport, because in their essential details airports are all the same: they are designed that way to reduce culture shock and help travellers passing through to feel as though they haven't really got off the plane at all.

You've checked in the requisite couple of decades early, courtesy of the IRA and ETA, and now you have time to kill. McDonald's is full of depressed-looking people in vest T-shirts, baseball caps and bum bags. The amusement arcade is full of drunks, as is the English-style pub. All the plastic bucket seats are occupied by angry families. Once you've exhausted the pile of Jeffrey Archers and copies of *Bravo Two Zero* in the newsagent, swallowed some Nurofen in the chemist, tried out the lipsalves in the Body Shop, there is only one alternative open to you: travel accessories.

The thing about travel accessories is that they prove just how deeply ingrained is the human urge to shop. Travel, however much you like it, is unsettling: it is an experience that contains the seeds of chaos and is one of those times when you have virtually no control over your environment, like being in hospital or signing on at the DHSS. Shopping is a way of re-exercising that sense of control. And the fact that a group of smart companies has tapped into that primeval urge to rip you off hardly matters.

A good travel accessory has to have the following characteristics: it must be easily made in grey or white plastic; it must make people go "ooh, that's a good idea" when they see it; it must be firmly packaged in card stapled to plastic so the consumer can't get it out and feel the quality until after they have laid over their money; its 300 per cent mark-up must make it fall within the price range of £6.95 to £8.95 so that the consumer buys more than one object; and it either never quite fulfils its purpose or breaks the second time it's used.

Face it: if you haven't already bought an adaptor plug before you get to the airport, that probably means you don't have any need for it. And what about those handy ways of carrying your money to avoid the notorious pickpockets that infest every town that's not the one you live in? They either show under your clothes, are impossible to get to without completely disrobing, or made of a material that causes sweat rash. Those pots of mosquito-repellent wipes lose their tops in your handbag and turn into extremely high-priced hankies. Neck pillows, which in themselves are a wonderful invention, are always constructed with seams that spring a leak when you deflate them.

We continue, none the less, to keep buying them. Gatwick Airport has a higher per capita consumer spend than Alton Towers. One should, of course, commend companies whose entrepreneurial spirit has risen to this challenge, but isn't it ironic that, if it weren't for the threat from terrorist groups whose main gripes include economic exploitation, there would be virtually no one in Europe who owned a handy folding toothbrush in a plastic case complete with a tiny tube of dentifrice?

Serena Mackesey

AUCTIONS

Bonhams presents an important but virtually unknown name — Kenkichi Tomimoto — at its contemporary ceramics sale, Wednesday and Thursday (6pm). The Japanese artist was taught to throw pots by the grandfather of British studio pottery, Bernard Leach.

Hitherto, mention of Leach and Japan has conjured only the name Shoji Hamada, who was Leach's inspiration during his 11 year stay in the country from 1909. But it was in Tokyo in 1912 that "Tomi" used Leach's wheel to make his first pot.

There are pots by Hamada at most Bonhams' auctions but Tomi's are scarce and sought after by collectors. This sale has 11 pieces of his. There is an exquisite 5-inch high white octagonal lidded pot of 1935 estimated at £1,800-£2,500 and a set of five porcelain dishes with red circles enclosing blue painted landscapes that he gave to Bernard and Janet Leach as a wedding present.

Estimated £6,000-£8,000, they are from Janet Leach's outstanding collection of Dame Lucie Rie, who died last year, having achieved the reputation of Britain's greatest potter. Bernard Leach's sepia pen and wash drawing of a dew pond on the South Downs, est. £1,200-£1,800, belonged to her.

For those with limited funds who share her eye for promising pots, an

unnamed stoneware St Ives coffee pot with ill-fitting lid, once part of her collection, is estimated £140-£180. The buyer gets an enviable provenance and the right to speculate that Dame Lucie fell in love with the pot because it has low-slung ergonomically efficient handle, a design feature she pioneered.

Rubbing shoulders with dozens of "Bernards" and "Lucies" at Bonhams are an unprecedented number of comparatively unknown names trying their luck for the first time in the contemporary ceramics market's most prestigious point of sale. It is an unusual market in having fewer dealers than you can count on one hand. Instead of buying cheap at auction and selling dear in the high street, they often find themselves outbid by private buyers at Bonhams, where prices are determined.

So, to have a pot accepted for auction by Bonhams' mandarin Cyril Frankel is an honour. There are works by a dozen newcomers in this sale. My favourite: a porcelain ceramic bound by Paul Priest (b.1947), a virtual newcomer to Bonhams. It is an old scrappy creature, full of febrile movement made livelier by Priest's cultivation of an unfinished touch — as in the crimped pie-crust treatment of the hotud's spine. Est. £120-£180.

John Windsor

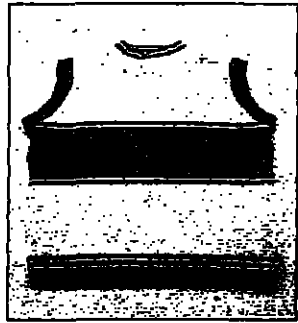
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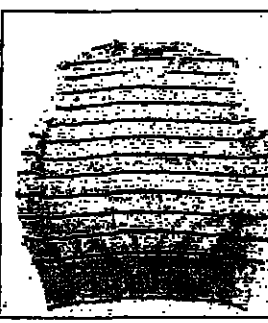
3 TSE. £139. Chocolate and ecru stripe, short-sleeved polo-style knit, with collar and buttons. Very simple and relaxed, a good classic look. Available from TSE cashmere at Harvey Nichols, Brompton Road, London SW1 and Liberty, Regent Street, London W1. Enquiries: 0171-235 5000.



5 Oasis. £24.99. Crew neck, sleeveless tank top in white, lime green and orange. Has a Lycra content to retain its shape. Would look great teamed with white jeans and sandals. Available from branches of Oasis nationwide. Enquiries: 0171-377 5335.



2 Clements Ribeiro. £247. 100 per cent cashmere top in red, brown, turquoise, black and white stripes. A cardigan is also available to make up a twinset. This has been a popular look among the fashion cognoscenti and is sure to fly out of the shops. From Liberty, Regent Street, London W1 and Matches, Richmond and Wimbledon.



4 The Scotch House. £140. Mint and black sleeveless sweater in 100 per cent cashmere. A great buy for all seasons, wear with bare arms in summer and under a jacket in winter. Available from The Scotch House, Brompton Road, London SW1 and Regent Street, London W1. Enquiries and mail order: 0171-581 2151.



6 John Smedley. £67. Long-sleeved striped top in buttermilk, pistachio and blue in 100 per cent sea-island cotton. A very thin knit of beautiful quality. From S Fisher, 22-23 Burlington Arcade, London W1. Enquiries and mail order: 0171-580 5075.

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Lufthansa
TOKEN

7

THE INDEPENDENT

TRAVELFINDERS

TELEVISION
999 (BBC1)

Michael Buerk knows all about rescues; 999 saved his career. By Jasper Rees

Michael Buerk delivered probably the most influential news report in broadcasting history. A bit like Neil Armstrong or, more parochially, Geoff Hurst, he carries the knowledge that nothing he does will ever match the impact made by one day's work in Ethiopia. It can't be the lightest burden to lug into the office every day; no longer out in the field, he leans against the fence admiring the greener grass beyond it.

This explains his touching fidelity to 999. The catastrophes of which it tells have all already happened, some of them several years before. Terrifying for the participants, they have been tamed for our entertainment, packaged into a consumable narrative complete with dire portents and a cathartic ending.

When 999 first drew accusations of sensationalism, Buerk leapt to its defence. Less, you sense, out of belief in the product than out of gratitude for the rescue operation it performed on his own career. For five series now it has been getting him out of the news room. Television presenters down on their luck would be strongly advised to send off for a 999 Carersavers Video Pack listing how the rescue was performed.

First of all, 999 teaches presenters to BE ALARMIST. Whether reporting from an Ethiopian drought or a suburban kitchen, Buerk's vocal role is always to sound as if he's just peeped round the corner and can see death lying in wait. But don't try this at home: it's unsafe to talk like this unless you're in front of a camera.

It helps to DRESS THE PART. For a report on a sailing accident in which a yachtswoman was trapped underwater, our intrepid presenter is got up like a marine commando in tight black polo neck. For the maritime safety-hunts section he sensibly straps himself into a life jacket. But the piece de resistance is the miner's helmet with lamp.

On the news all Buerk's hands are allowed to do is shuffle bits of paper, but on 999 they SAW THE AIR. This is best illustrated in the piece about the tree surgeon who inadvertently performed surgery on his own leg with a machine for grinding tree stumps. As Buerk impresses on us that this is "a pretty powerful piece of equipment", his right hand performs light staccato jabs at it, as if afraid to get too near.

His most expressive gesture accompanies the words, "Make sure you're properly trained." The left hand, palm down, goes up and down in a slow motion, as if administering a reassuring pat on the head to a large dog. Or a seated viewer.

THEATRE Lady Chatterley's Lover, The Cockpit, London

So did the earth move? Adrian Turpin watches the first adaptation of DH Lawrence's controversial novel to hit the London stage since 1961



No ice cubes or baby oil: Connie Chatterley (Simone Lahbib) and Oliver Mellors (Peter Tate)

Photograph: Stuart Morris

Hard cases make bad law. And, if *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is anything to go by, bad books make good law. Without the obscenity trial of 1960, the story of Connie Chatterley's passion for the gamekeeper Mellors would be just another minor DH Lawrence novel, wedged on academics' bookshelves between *Aton* and *The Trespasser*, and probably unopened since 1963 (or whenever else it was that sexual intercourse began). The plot is paper thin, the language priapically bloated, and the characters little more than ciphers for the author's kooky quasi-religious beliefs about sex and class. The question Britain's first stage adaptation of the novel for 35 years begs isn't "Why wait so long?" but "Why bother at all?"

Well, it must have some appeal. Fusion Theatre's production ran five months in Toronto, before reaching the Cockpit. Why? A cynic might suggest the hearty on-stage nudity (the promise of which has been shamelessly used to hype the show) and the novel's totemic fame. That, though, would be unfair. This is, for the most part, a well-cast, well-written, well-directed production. Marshall Gould's adaptation wisely avoids the temptation to add its own layer of fantasy and phantasmagoria Ken Russell-style on to the original. The scenes are short to the point of being staccato. Connie's marriage, the outbreak of war, Sir Clifford Chatterley's confinement to a wheelchair are done with in the first 10 minutes. By the time Mellors enters, strolling in the woods with his gun, proceedings already have a certain pace to them.

Poor Mellors. Or rather, the poor actor playing him, who must cope with some of the silliest dialogue known to English literature. Anyone who can say, "We fucked a flame into being and for me it is the only thing on Earth", without making an audience snigger, probably justifies the admission fee on his own. Peter Tate manages this and more. At first I had my doubts, when he seemed not so much noble savage as plain noble, too posh for a collier's son. But you soon warm to him, and after a while Mellors's self-conscious switches between Derby dialect and King's English seem utterly natural, as does the character's unlikely blend of tenderness and animal sensuality.

Perhaps there aren't too many surprises or revelations, but there is one splendid scene in which Mrs Bolton, the village woman who tends Clifford (an excellent Carolyn Jones), plays chess with him, while Mellors seduces Connie. It's genuinely odd. Tristan and Isolde play chess in the legend, as do Ferdinand and Miranda in *The Tempest*. But here the young lovers are replaced by an impotent aristocrat and a woman who acts like his nanny. The other early, semi-clothed love scenes could benefit from a touch more of this strangeness. Only once the clothes come off do sparks finally fly, and the sex itself is surprisingly watchable: a vast improvement on Hollywood's ice-cube and baby-oil variety, even if it does have Lawrence's coal-smudged fingerprints all over it.

To 4 May. The Cockpit, London NW8 (0171-402 5081)

CLASSICAL
National Youth Orchestra

Nicholas Williams admires an energetic, polished conclusion to a Bruckner series

Time and tide wait for no man, but in Bruckner symphonies time certainly passes more slowly than usual. As for tides, a flood of gathering energy in these works suggests inexorable forces harnessed by the composer in music that is itself a natural emanation. Beyond the stars, the crystal spheres sing eternal Bruckner Adagios.

Back on earth, the National Youth Orchestra played the Eighth Symphony at the Barbican on Thursday and found something of their own to say about this intense and complex masterpiece. In the past, their most challenging assignments have demanded and received both discipline and mature knowledge of style and substance; which is probably why the London Symphony Orchestra invited them to take over the first concert of their Bruckner-Mozart series. Coached by LSO principals at a recent residency and conducted by János Füst, the young players could be safely entrusted not just to close the show, but to add the hallmark of their own polished enthusiasm.

In the event, there was a certain amount of getting down to business in the first movement, not helped by a platform introduction that destroyed the essential mood of silence prior to such an extensive journey. The opening musical statement lacked due sense of primal mystery in consequence, though the ensemble's concentration and desire to transcend the notes was plain to see. But Adrian Wilson's oboe playing soon became an inspiration, while the flutes remained leaders of the pack until that breathtaking moment where the music falls away, leaving one of their number incanting pale arpeggios above a queasy abyss.

Füst's sure, committed grasp of the music included a special rapport with the strings, though he was also sensitive to the needs of other orchestral departments. Strings, horn and clarinet wove deft patterns to begin the trio section of the Scherzo, though later they were a little too forward in their sense of climax. But everything came right in the slow movement, its main theme conceived without Mahlerian angst, and with the sudden harmonic swiftness at its end, plus three harps, a place where you held your breath as the music looked upwards. From here the musical tide flowed inexorably through to the thrilling flourish of percussion and the moment of reprise, the plain opening chord now set in a garland of orchestral floritura. The finale was broadly paced – a risk that Füst might have lived to regret in the already generous measure of the Haas edition of this work, but which came off magnificently.



We crowd round the winner. 'Any advice for bald people out there?'

It is Thursday, and the grand climax – after four long, arduous years – of the Hair Grower of the Year competition. Today, one man, deemed to have most successfully grown his hair back from baldness, will receive a check for £10,000 from Radio 2's Ken Bruce at a star-studded media event at the Savoy. And what a long, crazy four years it's been. Since 1992, hundreds of contestants from across the country have been drinking 1 1/2 litres of water while hanging upside-down by their feet and thinking non-stressful thoughts. And the finalists certainly look non-stressed. Still bald, admittedly, but non-stressed.

"Think of them as like the Wright brothers," says hair-growing evangelist Andy Bryant. "The Wright brothers only flew for 59 seconds. But they showed that it could be done."

"But they're still bald," I say. "No they're not," says Andy. "Look."

He shows me a "before" photograph of James Oldham. He looks semi-bald. Then he points to a semi-bald man in the crowd.

"That's James now," he says. "Still semi-bald," I mutter. "Half a centimetre on average!" says James. "That's how much his hair has grown back. The tip of the nose to the hairline measurement has remained a constant 14.5cm, but the width of the bald crown has reduced from 8.5cm to 6cm. And that's something."

And I guess it is, when they said it couldn't be done. But four years for half a centimetre, when a trip to the wig shop takes mere minutes, if they're so hair self-absorbed... Who can understand people sometimes?

But today, the nation's media are at least trying to understand. I rather thought I'd be the only journalist here, and would consequently be compelled to make awkward small-talk with deluded bald men for hours. But the room is packed. There are hundreds of us here.

And when the judging actually starts, and the contestants sit in a chair while four besuited experts crowd around each bald pate and run their fingers through the remaining hair, testing for shine, viscosity, density, and the like, and 200 journalists

are giggling like children underneath their hands; well – I can't think of anyone in the world I'd like to be less than a grand-finalist in the Hair Grower of the Year contest. The assertively unstressed competitors suddenly start to appear decidedly tense, and the terrible irony could be that, after four years of hanging upside-down and eating the right sorts of vegetables, all that good work could be undone by one high-profile media day at the Savoy, followed by an awful, ignoble evening of being the funny story at the end of the news.

The winner turns out to be James Oldham, and we crowd around and pretend to be genuinely excited. "How do you feel?"

"Great."

"Any advice for bald people out there?"

"I did it, and so can you."

"What's the secret of your success?"

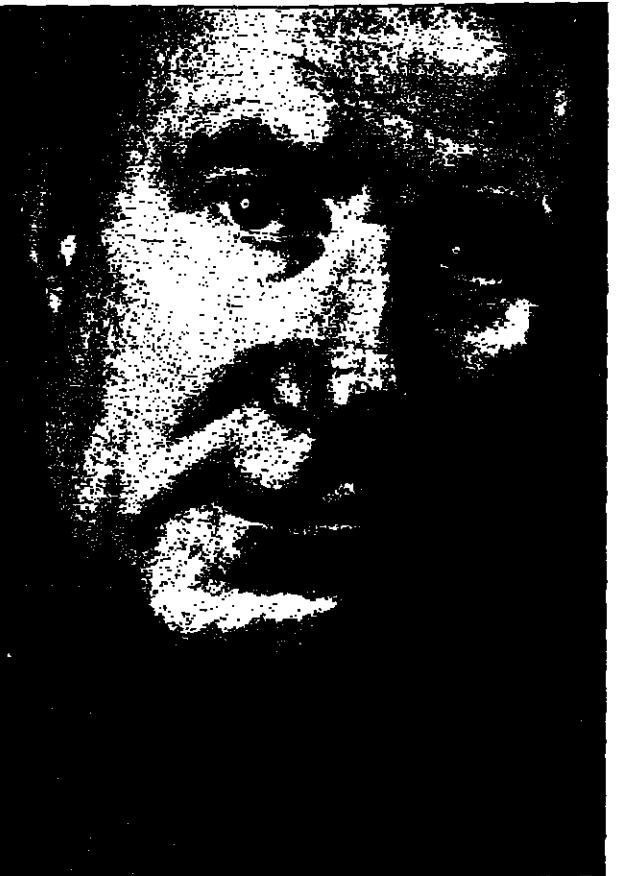
"No stress, hanging upside-down, drinking 1 1/2 litres of water, and eating the right sorts of vegetables."

"Any message for people with wigs?"

"I did it and so can you."

And so on.

THE SUNDAY REVIEW



The show that didn't go on... When Rupert Murdoch gave Andrew Neil his own American TV show, there was talk of a hard-hitting challenge to conventional news values. Zoë Heller watched it all go horribly wrong

Plus: Andy Beckett meets Orlan, the self-mutilating artist

And Peter Conrad interviews Roddy Doyle

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



THE WEEK IN REVIEW
David Benedict



THE MOVIE
MIGHTY APHRODITE

overview

Woody Allen's latest comedy is about Lenny (Allen) who tracks down a hooker (Mira Sorvino), the mother of his adopted son. Allen newcomers include Claire Bloom and Helena Bonham Carter as Allen's screen wife.

critical view

Adam Mars-Jones found the film "patronising" with nothing but "middle-brow competence". "Neither enough laughs nor insights to hold the attention," complained *Time-Out*. "Professionally, Woody has the same pre-occupations as Joe Eszterhas: screenwriter of *Basic Instinct* and *Showgirls*, observed the *Spectator*. "Allen goes into freefall with this comedy of unclear intentions," signed the *FT*. "Sweet success... we should still watch with gratitude," agreed the *Times*. "Pretty good value, and expertly made," agreed the *Guardian*.

on view

91 mins. Cert 15. On release across London and across the country from 26 April.

our view

Sorvino bagged the Best Supporting Actress Oscar. Good as she is, it's not really enough.



THE OPERA
NABUCCO

Verdi's third opera arrives at Covent Garden in a production by the talented Tim Albery (with designs by Antony McDermott) which ruffled feathers at its Welsh National Opera premiere in September.

Stephen Walsh found the original production "a muddle", but much of the staging has since been toned down. "The boozing sadly obscured the magnificence of the performance... gripping singing and acting," cheered the *Guardian*. "This evening of rare vocal splendour," praised the *Times*. "Samuel Ramey brought distinction to the evening by ignoring all that was going on around him," asserted the *FT*. "Stop paying show-offs to insult talented singers by spluttering their half-wit egos over well-loved works," spluttered the *Standard*, predictably.

At Covent Garden, London WC2 (0171-304 4000) on 17, 19, 22, 25, 27 April before returning in June.

There were cheers as well as boos. Several critics moaned about Albery but praised the performances. Surely the two are connected?



THE EXHIBITION
GOMA

Julian Spalding has created four floors and 24,006 square feet of what claims to be the largest collection of contemporary art outside London, housed in the revamped Royal Exchange building.

Iain Gale was incensed. "A shambles... a hopeless farago... must be taken in hand before it is too late." "An aesthetic and intellectual disaster. The only good thing about GOMA is its location," agreed the *Independent on Sunday*. "A very quirky and provocative selection... interesting and provocative," said the *Times*. "Vile and, yes, accessible... not enough that is first-rate," noted the *Telegraph*. "A great addition to Glasgow," said the *Sunday Telegraph*. "Glasgow deserves better... one man's folly," concluded the *Guardian*.

Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow (0141-331 1854) Mon-Sat 10-5pm Sun 11-5pm. Admission free.

The annual forecast was 300,000 visitors. But more than 50,000 have been in just two weeks. You can fool some of the people some of the time.

It's out there: the art we love and hate

Tempers are already fraying over the plan to build a giant steel angel in Gateshead. It's the same the whole world over, says Jonathan Glancey. From Soviet mother figures to Jesus of Rio, there's nothing we like more than public art to get in a stew about — that's what it's there for

What have the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower, Jesus of Rio and Anthony Gormley got in common? Size, that's what. Well, size and art. The Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower and Jesus of Rio are three of the biggest works of public art the world has to show. Anthony Gormley, the British sculptor and winner of the Turner Prize, is about to enter this international Big Art Club by casting a vast angel that will spread its voluminous metal wings beside the furiously fast carriageways of the A1 at Gateshead.

Naturally, there are those who think Gormley's idea gormless. Waste of money, Stalinist stuff from Arts Council commissars. Better things to spend it on. Who's going to see it anyway? Motorists should have their eyes on the blasted road, not on some arty-farty angel! Bark. Bark. Bark.

In all likelihood, Gormley's angel will become popular and, if not loved, a much-sought-out marker on the long grind up and down the A1. Children, aesthetes, fast-lane reps and even the boys in the blue-flashing "jam sandwiches" will look out for it and otherwise use its other-worldly presence as a point of reference. Doubtless, those seeking thrills will try to shin up the angel's torso and bungee-jump from its wingtips. Doubtless, too, its mighty feet will be sprayed with graffiti, both mindless and heartfelt. I like it already and all I have seen is a photomontage in this week's newspapers.

Like all vast works of public art, the Gormley angel is bound to be controversial. The leading critics of the day, as well as a livid public, decided to hate the Eiffel Tower when it opened in 1889 as the sculptural highpoint of the great Paris international exhibition of that year. They caved in soon enough and the wonderful and all but useless tower has long been a symbol of Paris, of France and of our love of outsized monuments, even though we feel we ought to rail against them on grounds of money and taste.

Those lucky enough to have seen Rio spreading from beneath Christ's welcoming arms or the devastating Victory monument on the edge of Kiev will know, instinctively, that great public art has the power to move us in ways that we do not always like to admit to. A 190ft titanium statue representing the Soviet Motherland (but known locally as "Zheleznyaya" or "steel wench") may seem like kitsch on an unnecessarily heroic scale; yet the energetic form of this gigantic metal maiden reminds citizens and visitors alike both of the 200,000 Kievites who died defending the Ukrainian capital during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 and of the confusing twists and turns of political history that have since turned a failed "workers' paradise" into a free-falling free market.

Such sculptures are soul-stirring, even if something in us warns us that by their very scale and ambition they are somehow dangerous and almost certainly bad art.

But, again, who has watched the sun rise over the Great Pyramid of Cheops and not been moved? I have nothing but contempt for General Franco, but what confusing thoughts a naturally rebellious Catholic experiences when faced with the cloud-piercing Cross that the spiteful dictator had erected with slave labour at the cold heart of his Valley of the Fallen, outside Madrid. And what are Albanians to make, today, of the hideous statue of the Motherland that looms over Tirana? In the long days of Enver Hoxha's dictatorship, before it ended in 1987, the one and only place

Birmingham



Anthony Gormley's Iron Man stands, topside, in central Birmingham, monument to all those who have toiled and spun in the city since known as the Workshop of the World

Broadgate, London



George Segal's rush-hour crowd (also known as The Glums) are a delightfully miserable bunch designed, perhaps, to make commuters in Broadgate stop to laugh at themselves

Milton Keynes



The artificial cows who stand on bovine duty in the neat suburban fields of Milton Keynes have long proved to be popular with children, and yobs who insist on molesting them

Yorkshire Moors



Henry Moore's King and Queen ruled the Yorkshire Moors for very nearly 30 years until some artless nutcase decided to knock their heads off; a problem for public art in lonely settings

Jesus of Rio: the city spreads beneath his welcoming arms

Albanians could gather freely in any number was at the voluminous hem of Mother Albania's skirts. This Balkan matriarch is both loved and despised, at once a symbol of tyranny and of freedom.

Close up, many great works of public art do not stand up to expert criticism. The Statue of Liberty is justly popular, but quite potty as a work of art. The crossed scimitars clenched in Saddam Hussein's own vastly magnified hands that welcome (is that the right word?) visitors to Baghdad are unforgettable, but verge on the extreme edge of unlovable kitsch.

I think we like to love and hate monumental public sculpture. Without it, the world of scholarly art critic, pub-bore ("I don't know a lot about art...") and the rest of us would be a less interesting place. Public art on this scale stirs up latent emotions, causes reaction, nourishes the pages of travel brochures and guide-books. More than even their great temples and cathedrals, we remember world cities, and even whole regions, by their monuments, from the faces of US presidents carved into Mount Rushmore in North Dakota to strikingly designed electricity pylons striding across boundless landscapes. Public art matters.

The reason that pub bores get so hot under the collar about the idea of spending on public art is a minuscule proportion of the money we spend building arterial roads is that, while they can understand tarmac and cat's-eyes, art is still something of a threat, the stuff of shamans, incomprehensible waffle on smart talk shows and indecipherable writing in low-circulation magazines.

What they should get hot under the collar about is not public art itself, but the poor quality and low ambition of so much of the stuff that has littered public spaces over the past 20 years. All too often public art is no more than a form of chintzy, cheery wallpaper pasted over the cracks in the design of ugly city centres, a half-embarrassed attempt at redeeming the irredeemable banality of supermarkets, office complexes and shopping centres. This is the sort of art that Sir Norman Foster once memorably likened to "lipstick on the face of the gorilla". Or what others have, a little unkindly, called the "token Henry Moore syndrome".

The money spent on this urban wallpaper would be better spent on making beautiful the infrastructure of our towns and cities. Better a fleet of handsome city buses — rolling sculpture — thoughtfully designed and beautifully maintained than a bronze boy hanging on to the tail of a bronze dolphin in a fountain decorated with discarded soft-drink cans.

There are several bodies, most notably those such as the Public Arts Commissions Agency and the Public Arts Development Trust, working intelligently and energetically to bring new art into popular focus in Britain's streets and squares. They have a long way to go. Too much public art remains little more than a toy, a prettification of impossibly ugly places carried out in "the chairman's wife chose the boardroom curtains" sort of way.

What people will respond to, and dramatically so, from the bore to the open-minded, is sculpture on a scale that makes an impact, causes us to think and, hopefully, delights or moves us too.

We are often too apologetic, over-reticent in Britain, and make much weedy public art as a result. Anthony Gormley has got the right idea: demonic or delightful, his Angel of the A1 should be more welcome to tomorrow's motorists than any number of Happy Eaters, Little Chefs and artful signs to edge-of-town superstores.

The context in which one sees a picture matters; the proper response is to think about its effects on you

"You couldn't make it up" read an exasperated headline in the *Daily Mirror* this week. The item it surmounded was very short and it reported that a nude woman had been "axed from a vintage wine label — because American feminists thought it was offensive". The story was picked up elsewhere, too, where it also served as a neat symptom of political correctness. The *Times* gave a few more details in its Diary: it seemed that Mouton-Rothschild had been obliged to withdraw 30,000 bottles of its 1993 vintage from America after objections to the Balthus drawing of a naked young girl which appeared on the label (Mouton-Rothschild has invited artists to decorate its labels since 1945). The Baroness was said to be surprised by the reaction: "The fragile and mysterious girl Balthus has drawn," she said, "seems to hint at some secret promise of undiscovered pleasure."

She does indeed. Clearly not a "woman", as the *Mirror* had described her, the pre-pubescent girl lies back, arms behind her head, and legs slightly parted. It is not an obscene pose, but it is not a modest one either (you could readily find its equivalent in any top-shelf magazine). Her impassive gaze is directed at the viewer, suggesting that she knows she is being observed and chooses not to conceal herself. To say that it is sexually inviting would be too crude, far cruder than the drawing itself. But that the picture draws on a border between innocence and experience is undeniable.



THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

There was a certain oddity to the complacent press reaction to this story — the general assumption that the feminazis were on the march again — particularly in a week that offered a very different account of the power of images to disturb and affront. Reporting the victory of an independent newsmagazine in his battle not to be sent unsolicited soft-core porn by WH Smith, most newspapers were broadly sympathetic — this wasn't political correctness, it seems, but a moral stand, a proper argument about where and by whom such images should be seen. The superficial distinction is obvious — one was art (to be defended) and the other was porn (undefensible). But looked at more closely the distinction offers an X-ray of the prevailing pieties.

Usually this century's increasing liberality about artistic subject matter is read as a history of diminishing prudery. Manet's *Olympia* shocked its original audience but could now happily decorate a greetings card. But it would be a mistake to see this as the triumph of aesthetic values over pinched morality, a protection of art against improper advances. It actually records a retreat, a diminishment of the power of the drawn or painted image. To

make something safe can mean two things: to protect it from danger or, as in the case of defused bombs, to render it harmless. It's the latter that applies in the case of art.

Some of this is because photographs have greedily absorbed our anxiety about depiction, have occupied all of the limited attention that we can give to such matters (in a finite world we must choose what worries us — and in this century photography has presented a more pressing case). The effect has been that hand-made images, by contrast, have come to carry an idea of innocence or detachment from the real world, that world in which incitement or appetite can so easily smear the purity of our contemplation. At the same time there has been an accompanying breakdown of any sense of a hierarchy of the spaces in which we look at images, from the private salon to the public gallery, from solitary inspection to mass observation.

Last year, for example, Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du Monde*, an explicit open-crotch painting of a woman's genitals (head and limbs out of frame), went on show in Paris. It was protected by bullet-proof glass and a permanent guard, not, presumably, because it was thought that it might offend art-lovers, but for fear of feminist protest. Courbet himself, though, would probably have been astounded that a picture commissioned for the private collection of a Turkish erotophile would eventually be displayed before a mixed gathering of men,

women and children. "Today, we cannot remain indifferent to a painting of such intensity," said the French culture minister, but the untroubled display proved precisely the opposite. There were no protests — the inert gas of connoisseurship had rendered the picture impotent.

In one way, then, those who objected to the Balthus drawing on the wine bottle actually pay more honour to his art than those who think the fuss is just a laughable symptom of a new prudery. They at least recognise that the context in which one sees a picture matters, and that the proper response to art is to think about its effects on you, not simply glance and pass on.

It's relatively easy, in fact, to restore some sense of this. Imagine that the *Times* and the *Mirror* had learnt that the manager of a children's care home had decorated the interior with reproductions of Balthus's child nudes. The first assumption would not be, I think, that this was simply an expression of good taste or a laudable attempt to bring some beauty into young lives. As it happens, Balthus's paintings are not pornography but they are not simply pretty either — they touch on a peculiarly volatile subject for our society, the sensuality of children, and, unlike Mouton-Rothschild, they do not travel well — they need to be seen in a place where proper attention can be paid to them. In that sense, the Mouton-Rothschild story isn't an account of a defeat for art, but a perverse sort of victory.

GLYNDEBOURNE

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How to keep Mum

Carol Thatcher's portrait of her father reveals a bumbling little Englander with a surprising streak of clear-sightedness and an instinct for word damage limitation. By Robert Winder

One of the greatest mysteries of the Thatcher years was how the Prime Minister's husband managed to avoid the kind of sarcastic opprobrium that is routinely heaped onto female political consorts such as Glensy Kinnoch, Hillary Clinton or Cherie Blair. Denis Thatcher was, after all, a senior industrialist, a union-busting and socialist-hating director of a multinational company (Burmah Oil); and, as he himself couldn't help pointing out, he knew more about economics than half the Cabinet. Yet for over a decade the media was happy to portray him as nothing more than a Pooterish, pinkie-and-golf-bore in a silly hat, practising his seven-iron on the lawn at Chequers while his wife dealt with the fate of nations indoors.

No one ever suggested that he was pulling strings, calling shots or weaving tricky webs behind the scene; no one ever felt that the country had fallen into the untested hands of a malign, right-wing Rasputin with a sinister line in persuasive pillow-talk. On the contrary, he never seemed like anything more than a long-suffering, henpecked old fogey who didn't want much out of life. Just a kip in front of the rugby and a sharpener before lunch.

Obviously it helped that Mrs Thatcher rarely gave any sign of being susceptible to special pleading from anyone – let alone some dimwit husband. And *Private Eye* played its part, contributing enjoyably to the depiction of Denis as a buffoon through the "Dear Bill" letters. But Denis Thatcher himself, as this surprisingly crisp biography by his daughter makes plain, can take most of the credit for keeping himself out of harm's way. Inspired by an old maxim of his father's – "Whales don't get killed unless they spout" – he made the extremely shrewd decision to give no interviews of any sort during his wife's stay in the limelight. When he met the Duchess of York at a dinner and she "whined" about the bad press she always received, he was unsympathetic. "Ma'am," he said. "Has it occurred to you to keep your mouth shut?"

His own vow of silence was followed through with unusual resolve and atten-

Below the Parapet: A Biography of Denis Thatcher by Carol Thatcher
HarperCollins, £16.99

tion to detail. "Never make speeches longer than four minutes," he wrote, "and prepare them very carefully to ensure that there is no possible quote. This results in the press not ever reporting that you were there at all". Many people would have resented being portrayed as such a twerp, but Denis has the last laugh here. "Remember that it is better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool," he advised one would-be consort, "than open it and remove all doubt".

In one sense it is odd that the nation seemed, if anything, to pity him – as if it were automatically an indignity for a man to have a wife more powerful than himself. It was always presumed that Denis must "mind"; in fact, of course, he had one of the most interesting and lively retirements anyone could wish for, and knew it ("For 40 years I have been married to one of the greatest women the world has ever produced"). He was helped by having a clear-sighted and realistic dislike of politics in the first place. "So many politicians," he tells his daughter, "are under the misapprehension that the rest of us think all the time about politics; the truth of the matter is, the great British people don't give a damn. The only people who keep it going is the press".

This might seem jaundiced, but Mrs Thatcher was probably lucky to be married to a man with this point of view. Just imagine what she'd have been like if she'd had someone egging her on. And it allowed Denis to be more perceptive, at times, than his wife's entourage of political advisers. In one of the book's great moments of inside knowledge, Denis raises a glass to the euphoria that followed Mrs Thatcher's third election win and says, "In a year, she'll be so unpopular you won't believe it".

It is widely supposed that this book is Carol Thatcher's sneaky revenge against her mother. It is true that Mrs T. hardly



"Better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool"

Photo: Rex Features

cuts a likeable figure, dashing in and out of the house without so much as a How's-your-father. But it is inevitable that a book whose aim is to restore the reputation of Denis should to some extent amplify what it was he had to put up with. As soon as Maggie became leader of the Opposition, for instance, she was assigned a security guard. Denis was the last to know. One night he returned to the house in Flood Street and found a man he took to be a friend of Mark's. "When Margaret arrived, we started leaving and, bugged me if this chap didn't follow us out. No one told me who the hell he was."

There are numerous moments of forlorn good humour such as this. Denis was in the hotel suite when Cecil Parkinson resigned. "Margaret said to him, 'I'm very unhappy but you've no choice but to get out, otherwise the press will be at you'. He agreed. Then he mentioned that he was due to open the new Blackpool heliport and unveil a commemorative plaque. Margaret said, 'Never mind that. Denis will go and do it'. I did. I pulled the string and it had

a brass plaque underneath it, which read, 'Opened by the Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson...'

One of the reasons why *Private Eye* loved Denis Thatcher was because he had, not just the well-bugged-me language of the little Englander, but that he also held exactly the kind of narrow prejudices you find in the car park at Twickenham. He would refer to the inhabitants of Brixton as fuzzy-wuzzies, but would be mortified to think that he'd upset them. He was a lover of South Africa, but strikingly unimpressed by uppity, post-colonial types from elsewhere. "Who do you think is worse," he asked delegates at a Commonwealth Conference. "Sonny bloody Rampal or Ma sodding Gandhi?" India, he thought, was "high on the buggeration factor"; and he was not impressed by the Falkland Islands on his post-victory tour. "We sure as hell didn't go there for the real estate," he said. "It's miles and miles of bugger-all".

It isn't clear, actually, that Carol Thatcher has done her father too many favours with this book. After an awful

start ("It was a U-turn of mega proportions...") she settles into a good, easy stride, and she has used her relationship cleverly. It is hardly an intimate memoir – it doesn't, in fact, feel as if Carol knows her father all that well. But she certainly knows more about his domestic life than any outsider. For some reason, she seems to find her dad's rudeness to waiters a sign of waggish charm – he liked his meat burnt and frequently accused people of giving him food that was still alive. "If I take my hand off this bird, it'll fly away," he told one poor fellow. "Take it away, kill it and cook it."

At times like this he is exactly like the man in the "Dear Bill" letters – a pompous old eccentric who disguises his own battiness in an assumption that he is surrounded by twits. But at other times, she uncovers a streak of something so unselfish and open that it is rather touching. "The war didn't have a traumatic effect on me," he muses, "but I think I'm an insensitive person". And what's more, by jingo, he's proud of it.

All you need to know about the books you meant to read
by Gavin Griffiths

EVELINA (1778)
by Fanny Burney

Plot: Evelina is 17 and beautiful with "a certain air of inexperience and innocence". Abandoned by her father, she is brought up in the country by her wise and sententious guardian, the Rev Mr Villars. Now of marriageable age, she is invited by a friend of Villars to stay in London. Here she learns to mind her p's and q's, and falls in love with the courtly Lord Orville. But her relatives seep with coarseness and snobbery and indulge in slapstick, and Evelina is stalked by the rakish nincompoop Clement Willoughby, who would be the villain of the piece were he not such a mess of affectation. Finally, Sir John Belmont acknowledges his deserted daughter and proves to be golden-hearted. Evelina becomes a wealthy heiress, which assists her marriage to Lord Orville. "I knew not till now," she writes "how requisite are birth and fortune to the attainment of respect and civility."

Theme: The exchanges between Evelina and her guardian are the moral core of the novel. Evelina is inexperienced, but her judgements are rooted in empirical observation. Burney demonstrates that although Evelina is free in her judgement, she must conform to the female stereotype of passivity.

Chief strengths: The book is a patchwork of previous writers. The claustrophobic domesticity of Richardson is given fresh air; Fielding's didacticism is presented more "objectively"; even Smollet's penchant for crude farce is included.

Chief weakness: The men – a dreadful bunch of club bores. The most difficult passages to digest are Evelina's outbursts about her guardian: "With a pleasure that bordered on agony, I embraced his knees."

What they thought of it then: Samuel Johnson thought it was better than Fielding. Gibbon read it in a day. Reynolds and Burke in a night.

What we think of it now: Burney's enthusiastic espousal of quietism poses problems; Richardson is more radical in his view of women's rights.

Responsible for: Inspiring Jane Austen, of course.

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BLACK SWAN

Cockpits and casting couches

He was a film mogul, flyer, hermit and syphilitic. Godfrey Hodgson reads the history of Howard Hughes

When I'm gone," said Howard Hughes, dying in Acapulco, with festering bedsores untended on his back and an income of \$75,000 an hour, "the biographers are going to flock around, and I don't want them to dwell on the girls and the movies. I want to be remembered for only one thing – my contribution to aviation."

Fat chance. The biographers have flocked, and it is on the girls and the movies that they have dwelled most lovingly. Few biographies of aviators come equipped, as this one does, with a five-page list of their sexual conquests and near-misses, in alphabetical order.

This is an anthology of Hollywood's finest, from Carla Balanda ("Real name, Sally Bliss", probably platonic) by way of Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Yvonne de Carlo, Olivia de Havilland, and Ava Gardner, all through to Jane Russell ("Mean, moody, magnificent") Lana Turner ("the Sweater Girl") and the sumptuously named debutante, Gloria Vanderbilt.

Philip Larkin was ill-informed. However long it took to catch on in Hull, in Hollywood sexual intercourse was well-established a generation before 1963. But there is nothing quite so tedious as lists of sexual conquests. Hughes's *paraphernalia sexualis* is not altogether uninteresting, though, just because he was so crazy. Brown and Broeske dignify his brand of insane bullying with the term "Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder", which is as good a name as any other. Disorder it certainly was.

Hughes was a caricature of the old-style phallicist. Although he kept company with some highly independent women, such as Ava Gardner and Katharine Hepburn, he was into imprisonment and harems. He used to have his people ship in "starlets"



Hughes: the syphilitic sultan

the fresher the better, from the Mid West and points south. They were warehoused, coiffed, styled and given elocution lessons until ready for the imperial casting couch.

He even communicated for months on end with one of his wives, the good-natured Jean Peters, by telephone alone. He had her installed in one hangar in a Beverly Hills garden while he was living in another, and he rented six other accommodations for spies, goons, golfers and body-servants.

These creeps, most of them Mormons, supplied him with written reports on what his wife was up to ("At 8.52 am, JP ordered one coffee, 2 milk and papers"). Peters had to communicate with her husband through the same creeps. "3.10pm. Tell Mr Hughes I'm sick and tired of waiting for him to call and I'm going to bed."

Hughes was terrified of germs. He not only insisted that everything that came near him be handled in wads of Kleenex, he issued lengthy instructions on how to pick things up with it. "If you need to lower the seat," he told Jean Peters when escorting her to the movies, "do it with Kleenex." Somewhere along the way, in spite of

Howard Hughes: The Untold Story
by Brown and Broeske
Little, Brown, £20

this cleanliness fetish (which seems to have been encouraged by his over-protective mother), the authors believe that Hughes contracted syphilis. They say it had reached the tertiary stage (dementia and locomotor ataxia) by the time he was in his fifties.

The pox would account for some of the craziness of his later years, but the explanation is not wholly convincing. For one thing, although the Mormons creeps kept him in an inert state with massive doses of cocaine and valium, when it suited them (when, say, they needed him to sign some papers), they would cut off the dosage and the poor old man would perk up. They would cut his hair, have a barber trim his filthy beard, cut his talon-like finger and toenails, and he would do the business, sometimes even coming up with some fancy engineering mathematics. Then they would hit him with the cocaine and valium, and it would be the hairy hermit of Acapulco – or Las Vegas or the Bahamas – all over again.

If Hughes was in some ways a monster, he also possessed something of that combination of intelligence, energy and self-centred determination we call genius. His father invented an ingenious rocket for oil drilling and Howard Jr inherited a vast income derived from Hughes Tool. But he really did make a major contribution to aviation. He was obsessed with flight from an early age, and even before he had a pilot's licence had assembled the world's biggest aerial navy to shoot the war movie, *Hell's Angels*. He had the courage of a psychopath, and went on

flying after numerous crashes, two of which did damage to his tall, lanky body that would have killed most men.

He set new records for flying across the US, then around the world. He created the airline TWA. In the Second World War, he built Hughes Electronics into the biggest supplier of weapons systems to the US navy and air force. He designed and test-flew the legendary "Spruce Goose", a giant wooden aircraft. He invented the air-to-air missile. He invented, then mass-produced, the "all-weather interceptor" fighter, and designed the navigation system for the F-102. He virtually invented the battle helicopter, and pioneered unmanned satellites.

Finally, he was involved in secret business with the CIA and other hush-hush agencies, including a scheme to lift a Soviet submarine from the bed of the Pacific. There is, too, a sense in which Watergate was "about" Howard Hughes. He gave large amounts of money to Richard Nixon, some of it undeclared cash to finance dirty tricks.

Brown and Broeske do not delve very deeply into Hughes' involvement in Watergate, nor do they unravel in any very satisfactory way his business history. They only sketch in various intrigues by the Mormon creeps to take advantage of Hughes' illnesses, natural and artificially induced, to take over his industrial empire and his vast other assets. They make a valiant effort to obey the crazy titan's dying wish and write about his contribution to aviation, but you sense their hearts are not wholly in it.

They are in their element, though, when it comes to dope and broads, machinating Mormons, and the syphilitic sultan's Hollywood harem. Read all about it!

Audiobooks



Gulliver's Travels
read by Neville Jason
Rhodes to Home
read by Gary Rhodes

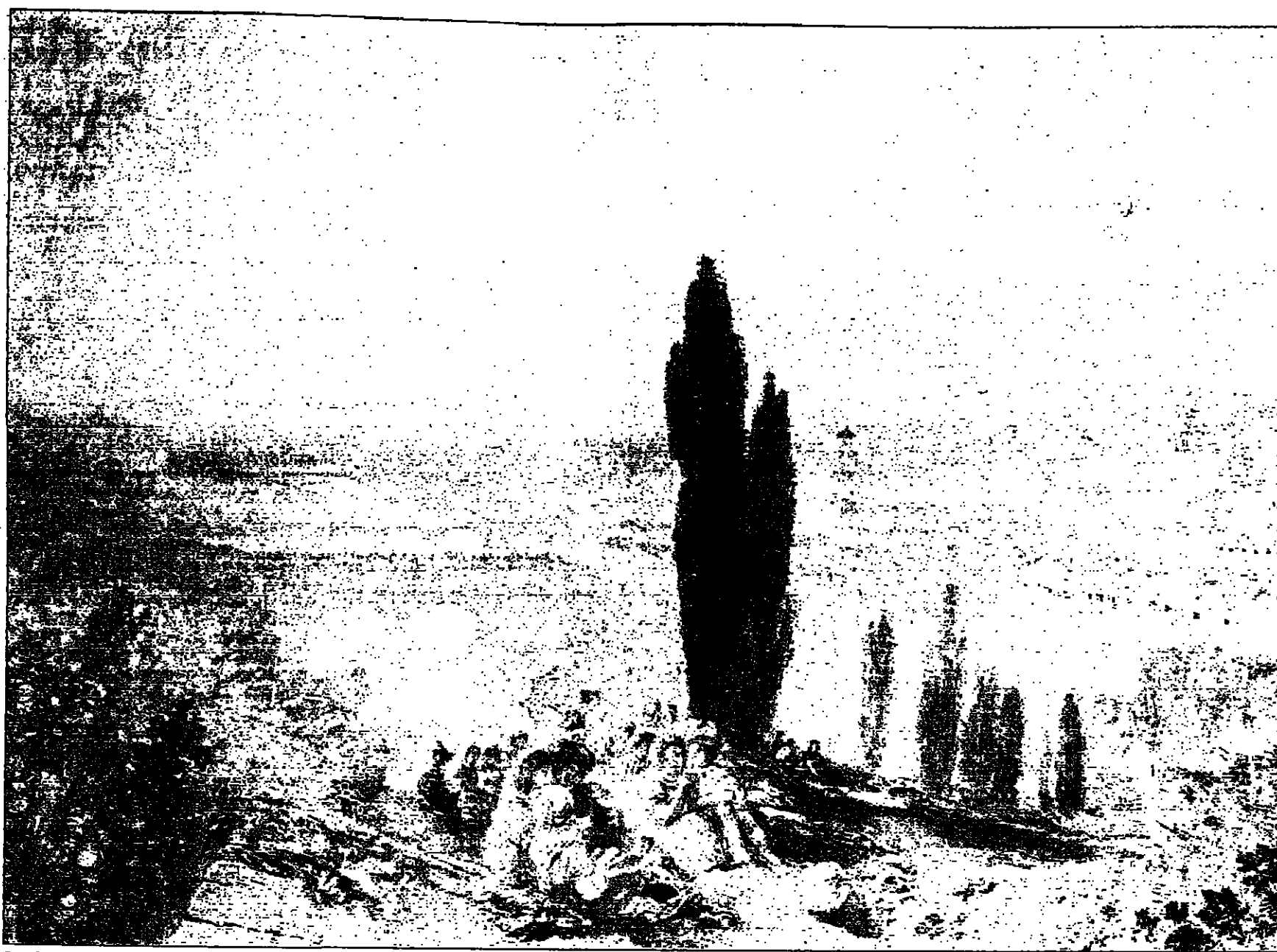
If you were unenlightened as to the point of Jonathan Swift's legendary satire by Channel 4's much-hyped Easter two-parter, you'll enjoy Neville Jason's measured and intelligent reading of the real thing. *Gulliver's Travels* (Naxos, 4hrs, £7.99) includes Blefuscu, Laputa, Luggnagg and the Houyhnhnms as well as Lilliput and Brobdingnag adventures, and is much embellished by incidental music by Handel.

Can cookery work on tape? Much of the wine factor in *Rhodes to Home* (Reed Audio, £7.99) is a case of a perky television cook uneasy without visual prompts. Gary wastes valuable seconds insisting on how good everything is going to be, then glosses over the trickier manoeuvres involved. But this made mouth-watering listening on the way to Tesco's, and a useful booklet of ingredients is included.

Christina Hardyment

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Special to God: Turner, too, came to admire the Tuscany and the Florentines and painted this view of their city from San Miniato

Photograph: Bridgeman/National Gallery, London

A stylish scurry across the Arno

The British have always loved Florence. George Bull enjoys a celebration of the jewel of Chianti

Florence: A Portrait by Michael Levey, Cape, £25

The Florentines, like the English, have tended to think themselves special to God, even when he was chastising them. Writing his life of Michelangelo, the incomparable art historian Giorgio Vasari grandiloquently reported that, seeing that Tuscan genius had always been pre-eminent in the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture, the Almighty "chose to have Michelangelo born a Florentine, so that one of her own citizens might bring to absolute perfection the achievements for which Florence was justly renowned".

The Florentines and the English, moreover, have long displayed mutual admiration and regard, the former welcoming a long line of often conveniently rich expatriate English eccentrics, and (if well-off themselves) habitually employing English nannies, the latter eventually coming after the days of the Grand Tour to appreciate art in Florence and to prize the city as the cradle of the Renaissance. A unique treasury of Western art and one of the most beautiful cities in the world, Florence need not fret about being ignored by non-Tuscan Italians, for the English love her still, have created "Chianti" to be near her, and now offer a glowing tribute from one of their subtlest, most literate art historians.

Michael Levey's "portrait" of Florence is a true *travail de longue haleine*, and the reader must take it slowly or soon grow breathless. Concentration as well as stamina is needed, as if on a real-life scurry through the city trying to take in Duomo, Bargello and Palazzo Vecchio, the Uffizi,

San Lorenzo and the riches across the Arno; the art, painting and architecture, in large perspective and fine detail. Levey sets out to convey a sweeping historical view of Florence, of its physical development and political vicissitudes as these transformed the city between the Trecento and now, and a series of balanced appreciations of influential Florentines, thinkers, artists and politicians, as well as critical descriptions of its variegated artistic achievements.

He says, simply and boldly, that the book "is deliberately not purely a historical account, nor... an outline of Florentine art through the ages, and still less is it a guide-book. But it partakes of all three categories of approach, mingling them as history and art are mingled in the city. I recognise that at times such mingling may create some bewilderment...". Well, yes, they do, and yes, the "Selective Chronology" does, as Levey hopes, provide a "handrail" for the reader shaky on facts; but Levey carries it off because of the insights he provides, looking with a keen and educated eye into the splendours and delights of art and pictures, statues, buildings, and *objets d'art* of Florence.

Over the years, the erstwhile director of the National Gallery has written with perception and enthusiasm on Early and High Renaissance painting, on French and Venetian painting in 18th-century Venice, on Ottoman art, and significantly on his favourites, Tiepolo and Mozart. The story of Florence happily lets Levey bring Mozart into the picture (as composer of *La Clemenza di Tito*, written in 1787 to celebrate the coronation in Prague of Pietro Leopoldo, Grand Duke of Tuscany) and Tiepolo, as painting in Venice the same subject that Vincenzo Meucci showed about the same time in Florence (in a "pretty, powder-puff rococo ceiling decoration"). In general, Levey demonstrates in his scholarly writing the qualities of *sprezzatura* exemplified by both of his idols.

Florence: A Portrait encapsulates a sociopolitical history of Florence which cannot be faulted and which every so often is more than just a summary of other scholars' work. At its best in this context, the book in its last few pages – an Epilogue on the "revolution of taste which brought back to a central place in cultural consciousness the art of 15th-century Florence, and that of earlier centuries" – informatively connects to the "thrilling cause" of the Risorgimento a little genre painting by Odoardo Borrani of a seated girl sewing the three-coloured flag of Italy, with the date of 26 April 1859, when the last Grand Duke quit Florence for ever. Politics and art can't be always linked so neatly, but Levey succeeds in interweaving his material from the different strands of Florence's history smoothly enough. On politics, he often has interesting and fresh things to say – as when he marvels, not that the "precariously balanced, partly undefined system of government" of Cosimo, Piero and Lorenzo de' Medici came abruptly to an end when the French invaded Italy in 1494, but that it had managed to endure so long. On Tuscan literature, he writes with easy

familiarity, reminding us that Dante's Florence lacked the famous and familiar buildings we see now as its very quintessence and approximated, in its heaven-protected antiquity, to the poet's own expressed ideal of a city living in "peace, sobriety and decency".

The interest of Michael Levey's attractively illustrated (if inadequately indexed) cornucopia of a book ultimately springs from his informed and enthusiastic descriptions of its glorious pictures, statues and buildings. Invariably he brings this art vividly to life, placing it firmly in context, and often as not boldly declaring whether or not it is novel or fresh or revolutionary. Michelangelo's *Doni tondo*, for instance – "the essentially sculpted group of Virgin, Child and St Joseph... fit with dazzling clarity and set in a rocky landscape where naked youths, half-athletes, half-bathers, strangely lounge" – invites Levey's comment: "Nothing like it had been painted before in Florence..." Again, of Michelangelo's statues of the Capitani in San Lorenzo, Levey affirms: "Never before in a Christian religious environment had any men been raised at death to the status of a demi-god..."

This is not the stuff of guidebooks, certainly, but Levey's portrait of Florence is crammed with information to interest and bemuse the tourist as well as the student. He would make a marvellous guide to his beloved Florence, and would be forgiven for occasionally dragging in British politics and for introducing Michelangelo's universal David as a "gay icon".

Tracking the secret of King Lear's letters

Did Shakespeare's audiences see the same plays as us? By Lachlan Mackinnon

The major development in Renaissance literary scholarship over the last 10 years or so has been the rise of what is called the New Historicism. New Historicists want to place literary texts in the context of social history, to show how they form part of a larger documentary continuum in which early modern ideas about selfhood emerged, and were enacted, in the courtroom as much as in the playhouse. The aim is not simply to show how a contemporary audience might have understood poems or plays, but to demonstrate a continuity between literary and non-literary concerns. The nine essays in Lisa Jardine's new book exemplify some aspects of New Historicism practice.

The most interesting is "Reading and the Technology of Textual Affect", which draws together Erasmus's views on the writing of letters and the extraordinary number of letters exchanged in *King Lear*. Professor Jardine shows that Erasmus saw the familiar letter as "a highly crafted form of commu-

nication" which aimed "to convey passionate feeling, to create bonds of friendship, and to make the absent loved one (or intellectual kindred spirit) vividly present." This understanding was inherited by Shakespeare's contemporaries.

At first sight, it seems pretty obvious that letters are conscious rhetorical constructs; we address our lovers and our bank managers in different styles. Professor Jardine's point is more subtle, though, because it relates letter-writing to the establishment of community between individuals. The Erasmus letter is an honest substitute for being personally present, but when Goneril, for instance, asks her villainous servant Oswald "Have you writ that letter to my sister?", we see that the ideal of personal candour has been replaced by rhetorical expertise; to the destruction of community.

Professor Jardine argues that Shakespeare's audience, having these ideas about letters, valued the "controlled expression of feeling" and mistrusted the "raw emotion"

Essays in Appreciation
by Christopher Ricks
Clarendon Press, £25

which, she says, is all the honest characters have left. A modern audience, however, responds more immediately to pure feeling because we do not expect truth to be expressed rhetorically. "Like Gloucester and Edgar, we experience with immediacy that raw emotional intensity in a moral, social and historical void", whereas Shakespeare's audience would have been appalled by the loss of emotional control those characters undergo. For them, that was the tragedy.

Generalisations about Shakespeare's audience are, of course, usually deeply unhelpful and often patronising, suggesting as they invariably do that the past was a little dimmer and a lot less various than the present. I find it hard to believe that the groundlings had so strongly and unanimously inter-

nalised Erasmus's commentary on a letter of St Jerome or its assumptions; after all, as Professor Jardine points out, Lear himself does not share that understanding.

None the less, this essay is valuable on two counts. First, it undoubtedly shows a response which was possible for some of Shakespeare's audience, and one which is now unfamiliar. Secondly, without saying so, it returns us to the perennial mystery of Shakespeare's own relation to language, the radical scepticism which explains why we find in him no authorial commitment to the view that one utterance is more true than another. In that sense, though, Shakespeare's understanding is wider than Professor Jardine's.

The other essays in this book deal with *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Middleton's and Rowley's *The Changeling*. In each case, Jardine relates the plays to evidence drawn from social history. The odd effect is that the Shakespearean texts seem much more boring than usual,

but the others more interesting.

Dealing with *The Jew of Malta*, for instance, Professor Jardine brilliantly demonstrates that Barabas, the central figure, encapsulates a number of contemporary concerns about early capitalism for which a Jew was the necessary contemporary embodiment. For once, the play seems much more than a fascinating cartoon.

In the same essays though, she attacks *The Merchant of Venice* because Shakespeare's presentation of Shylock as "pathologically greedy, deceitful, vengeful and inhuman", whether or not this was for simply dramatic reasons, inevitably engages us "against his generalised person, his alienness and his creed".

She comes close to arguing that Marlowe was more aware than Shakespeare, which seems implausible, while the reading of *The Merchant* as anti-semitic is simplistic. Such slack moments mean that this book is, in the end, considerably less than the sum of its parts – like all too much New Historicist writing.

Michael Chabon

author of
The Mysteries of Pittsburgh

I wondered if perhaps it were all dawning on him at last; if he were beginning to realise that, having engaged, the night before, in activities as diverse as being dragged bodily and giggling from a crowded auditorium, committing grand larceny, and getting a hand job in a public place, he was now on his way to spend Passover, of all things, with the family of his dissolute professor's estranged wife, in a dented Ford Galaxie within whose trunk lay the body of a dog he had killed.

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Love in the afternoon

Doris Lessing's first novel for eight years is a subtle vignette of late middle-aged passion. Louise Doughty finds her in top form

All writers and reviewers should read Doris Lessing's own preface to her world-famous bestseller *The Golden Notebook*. In it, Lessing admits to losing her sense of perspective about critical opinion when her masterwork was published. "Recovering balance, I understood the problem. It is that writers are looking in the critics for an alter ego, that other self more intelligent than oneself who has seen what one is reaching for, and who judges you only by whether you have matched up to your aim or not." New novelists should have those words tattooed on their chests.

Love, Again is Lessing's first novel for eight years and its aim could be colloquially distilled as the desire to prove that there's life in the old dog yet. She has partially succeeded, both in terms of demonstrating her own writing skill and in the presentation of her subject matter, a convincing portrayal of an elderly, secure and intelligent woman falling comprehensively and fruitlessly in love with not one but two much younger men.

Sarah Durham, "a good name for a sensible woman", is a sixty-something theatre manager, comfortable in her comfortable home and at ease with her job at The Green Bird, the successful fringe theatre where she has worked for years. Widowed when young, she has raised two children on her own and remained cheerfully inviolate to the arrows of romantic passion ever since. The only persistent cloud on her life has been Joyce, her troubled teenage niece, who hangs out on the streets with prostitutes and drug addicts and turns up at her aunt's place once in a while to have a hot bath and pinch some jewellery.

Joyce is only a minor character

Love, Again
by Doris Lessing
Fleming, £15.99

but her presence resonates throughout the book, a salutary reminder that youth is not all sunbathing in bikinis and romping in the long grass. Without her the novel would be much more routine.

The main narrative strand is based on the Green Bird's latest production, a play about a turn of the century artist and musician called Julie Vairon. A social outcast during her lifetime, Julie is now an icon - particularly to Stephen Ellington-Smith, an aristocratic patron of the arts who is "angel" to The Green Bird's production, first in France, then in the grounds of his English country manor. The character of Stephen is the book's big problem. He is obsessively in love with the long-dead Julie and a walking example of the havoc love can wreak in those unused to its ravages. But his obsession is underway long before the book begins and we never really understand its genesis.

Sarah's passions are much more concrete as she falls firstly for Bill, the play's handsome juvenile lead, and then Henry, its director. Both men are young enough to be her sons and Bill, in particular, is spectacularly unworthy of her affections. Sarah's awareness of this is her chief redeeming feature. Even in the throes of sexual longing, she never loses her sense of how ridiculous the whole thing is. Once Bill has kicked open the door of her carefully preserved self-containment, the floodgates are open and Henry walks right in.

It is profoundly disappointing for



Doris Lessing: theories of love and messy practicalities

Photograph: Jeremy Nicholl

the reader - never mind Sarah - that she never gets to consummate either of these amours. Lessing's subject matter is the theory of love as much as its messy practicalities. (She quotes so many authors and songwriters on the topic that it is hard to avoid the suspicion she has rifled a dictionary of quotations). In the same way, there is little sense of the economic realities of running a theatre. Lessing has a thousand people turn up for an open-air dress rehearsal of Julie Vairon in a remote rural area of France - and they all go away enraptured despite

the fact that there is no banked seating or amplification. What she does capture - quite brilliantly - is the joyous self-absorption of a group of people all bent on the same artistic endeavour - the instant bondings, the sexual tensions and the claustrophobia.

In many ways, the most interesting relationships in the book are the non-romantic ones. There is an exonerating portrayal of Hal, Sarah's awful Harley Street brother, father to the unfortunate Joyce. At one point, Sarah visits their mother to try and understand

her own newly-acquired emotional vulnerability but comes away without an answer. We are left to speculate about the extent to which the seeds of romantic destruction are sown during childhood. In a scene of intense, almost painful insight, Sarah witnesses a harassed mother cruelly ignoring her toddler daughter in a park and a kaleidoscope of possibilities about Sarah's own, unexplored childhood opens up. It is a wonderful moment in a book which, for all its imperfections, is full of fine thought and feeling.

Portrait of the artist as cinematographer

Gilbert Adair is entranced by Kundera's latest tricks to mimic time and motion

Milan Kundera's new novel *Slowness* was published in French (the language in which, for the first time in its author's career, it was composed) exactly a year ago, more or less simultaneously with the release of the film *Speed*. The choice was therefore a plain and unambiguous one: speed or slowness? A film which, predicated on the notion that speed, that emblematic symbol and symptom of modernity, was in itself an unequivocally good thing, hurtled towards its denouement with the inflexible single-mindedness of an arrow which, were it to be distracted by anything on its trajectory, would miss its target? Or a novel which celebrated the self-teasing Epicurean delight in taking one's own sweet time, which toasted "those loafing heroes of folk song, those vagabonds who roam from one mill to another and bed down under the stars"?

Such a juxtaposition is apter than one might have expected, since, if it reads not at all like a putative film treatment, the narrative of *Slowness* does possess a dreamily digressive, faintly filmic feel, most reminiscent of that of Renoir's *La Règle du jeu* or Resnais's *La Vie est un roman*. Its present tense (for this is a fiction of multiple tenses, some of them, so to speak, conditional) is set in a chateau in France to which Kundera himself and his wife Vera motor down for a brief break. (The chateau, like so many, has been recycled into a hotel).

Along the way, however, he thinks of "another journey from Paris out to a country chateau", that made by the two protagonists of Vivant Denon's libertine novella *Point de lendemain* (or *No Tomorrow*), first published, anonymously, in 1777. That, in turn, segues seamlessly into a commentary on *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and the true meaning of the word "hedonism", which (we are now inside the hotel itself) reminds him of a friend, Vincent, and his unconditional adulation of the intellectual Pontevia, which prompts reflections on the whole phenomenon of the image-obsessed media pundit, which then...

I could go on. And I perhaps ought to, for I have to confess that I simply cannot

Slowness
by Milan Kundera
Faber, £12.99

figure out how he does it. Like all of Kundera's books, *Slowness* modulates between past and present, between fiction and fantasy, between memoir and essay, but with so slyly agile-footed a grace, so mercurial an insouciance, it seems almost never to touch the ground. (The exceptional limpidity and refinement of the prose may be a function of the fact that, writing fiction in what is for him a foreign language, Kundera has further simplified his never overly-fancy style). Is it a novel set in the eighteenth century illumined by digressions from the twentieth, or vice versa? It is impossible to say.

He walks his memories and musings around the estate of that chateau (a house and its park, interior and exterior - again, it occurs to one, the ideal cinematic space) as apparently idly as if he were walking a cocker spaniel before turning in for the night, and we follow him, slavishly, everywhere.

There are sharp, satirical vignettes en route, all of them rebuking the modern world for its bullying hypocrisies. Watching the agony of starving Somali children on television, Vera asks her husband, "Are there old people dying in that country as well?" An intellectual (whose name, Berck, if spoken aloud, is French for "Yuk") ponders on whether to kiss an AIDS sufferer at a charity dinner. Called upon to speak at a scientific seminar, a long-oppressed Czech entomologist forgets himself in the emotion of the moment, speaks instead about his own, newly-won freedom of speech, happily regains his seat and only then realises to his mortification that he has quite forgotten to deliver his prepared paper on the *Musca pragensis*.

Reaching its satisfying conclusion after only 132 pages, *Slowness* can after all claim some kind of narrative speed. Not the breakneck pace of *Speed*, though, but that, rather more perilous, of an electric fan into whose seemingly inoffensive halo one would be ill-advised to insert one's hand.

Piers and pie and Pinkie's heir

Chris Paling wrote his first novel commuting between Brighton and London. The second tackles the home turf. By Christopher Hawtree

I must plead guilty to manufacturing this Brighton of mine as I never manufactured Mexico or Indochina. So said Graham Greene of a novel which, 60 years on, keeps a grip on the imagination that visitors to the coastal resort are invariably disappointed by the reality of a provincial town choc-a-bloc with buses ferrying people to the suburbs in time for high tea.

This has not prevented periodic attempts at *The Great Brighton Novel*. With his second novel, close on the heels of the admirable debut *After the Raid*, Chris Paling has come up with something which might have resulted had David Copperfield written *Pulp Fiction*. In his first novel, Paling created a wartime

world strung somewhere between reality and madness, one in which the mind's cliffs of full were as vivid as the railway carriages, asylum and terraced houses through which his troubled hero appeared to pass.

Deserters, told some while after the event by a bisexual wastrel, Cliffie, is rather more strung out. He has fetched up in Brighton and, needs must, moved in with Barry, the proprietor of a tarted-up greasy spoon. Before long, Cliffie is also in thrall to the disturbed May, a lodger in the place. Cliffie decides to spirit her out, and so begins something of a Walter-and-June odyssey, one which has both hoodlums and officialdom on their trail after a fracas on the Pier and their

Deserters
by Chris Paling
Cape, £14.99

making off with another woman's child. Of a certain Mr. Hollinger we are told, "I'd never considered him to be a proper first division villain. He had too much intelligence for that. Pure villainy requires a good deal more mental instability." Such pithy remarks fill the novel, as Cliffie and May find it safer to separate and (after some nasty dealings that make Cliffie fearful for his lips) he ends up with a stint in Lewes gaol.

The story is not consistently told from Cliffie's point of view. Early on, he observes, for example, that "the darkness allows you to take a slice of the room and own it for a moment before passing on and finding another, until all of the room is yours." This authorial voice keeps creeping into Cliffie's territory. "There's something haughty and feminine about the town. It's unforgivably ugly and new in too many places but there's still enough life in the lofty old harlot for her to throw her skirts round you and haul you close for a long slow dance." That, surely, is the legend-conscious voice of Paling, who then slips into this, more akin to Cliffie: "People who come for the day

never see that. The place is a bitch to the day tripper, they're corralled down the worst dog-shit-laden streets, the poorest fastest restaurants, the most expensive pubs with the dirtiest glasses. But it serves them right."

Just as Brighton town councillors were once alarmed by signs ("Buy Brighton Rock") which inadvertently advertised Greene's novel, they will doubtless distance themselves from Paling's view of the place. That would be blinkered of them. Whatever the faults of the novel's shifting tone, it has something of that distinct view of the world which made one certain that the author of *After the Raid* is among the most accomplished English novelists to emerge in recent years.

Paperbacks

Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst

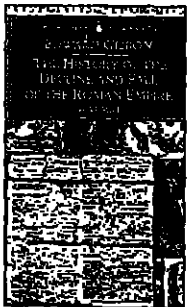
Domino by Ross King (Minerva, £5.99) Eighteenth century London is brought dizzily alive in Ross King's first novel, a peculiar mystery featuring a bearded-eyed castrato and a hapless young portrait painter. Set adrift amongst "Persons of Quality" and over-perfumed fops, the innocent George Cautley comes to discover that London's *beau monde* is an insubstantial and deceptive place to want to be. King's prose sniffs out London's darker street-corners with a doggedness to match Peter Ackroyd's.



Hemingway's Chair by Michael Palin (Mandarin, £5.99) Martin Sproat lives a double life. By day he works as assistant manager of The Post Office, by night he transforms himself into his bourbon-slugging hero, "Papa" Hemingway. And just as well, as the time to kick ass has come. Palin's gentle satire on the perils of Post Office privatisation is a study in physical comedy (people are always wearing peculiar sandals, or getting trapped in small cars) and untidy passions. An airport book worth picking up.



The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire Vol 1 by Edward Gibbon (Penguin, £15) Despite its awesome bulk and towering reputation, Gibbon's magnum opus is engagingly readable (one devotee is Rolling Stone Keith Richards). This first volume takes the story up to the last pagan emperor in the 4th century, including a detour in time for a swipe at the early Christians ("It was not in this world that the primitive Christians were desirous of making themselves either agreeable or useful").



Sleepers by Lorenzo Carcaterra (Arrow, £5.99) Lorenzo Carcaterra's "true story" reads like a treatment for a Martin Scorsese script. It's 1967, New York is Hell's Kitchen, and four young boys, Lorenzo, Michael, Johnny and Tommy spend their summer stealing comic books, sitting under water hydrants and running jobs for "King Benny", until an incident with a runaway hot dog cart sets events of a more sinister kind in motion. A big best seller in the States... but what with Catholic priests, Italian hoods, and little boys, how could Carcaterra go wrong?



Letters Vol 1: 1926-1954 by John Betjeman (Minerva, £7.99) Edited with exemplary skill by his daughter, this bumper haul reminds us what a treat old Betj was. The contents are more savage and self-confident than might have been expected. On his brief spell as prep school master: "how I loathe them all". On his father: "it makes me sick to think of him". Despite occasional hints of the melancholia which dogged his later years, the overarching impression is one of hilarity. Illustrated with the author's scratchy marginalia, this is the funniest collection of letters since Waugh's.



The Penguin Encyclopedia of Crime by Oliver Crixia (£9.99) One of the oddest reference books in recent years, but also creepily enthralling. Crixia (a great name for a villain), has an idiosyncratic approach to his murky subject matter. Successive entries include: Kidnapping, invention of; Kidney, human; Kids, crack; Killer bimbos. As well as potted accounts of causes célèbres, he delves into arcane areas ranging from treadwheels to "Dolphins, sex with". Not for the faint-hearted, this book is rich in black humour.



Who's reading whom



Douglas Adams, creator of 'The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy', has been weighing the evidence for man's earliest origins

I'm a voracious reader but as a result books get half finished or buried in a pile beneath the bed. One that has escaped this fate is Colin Tudge's *The Day Before Yesterday* (Cape) which traces human evolution from 5 million years ago until the present day. I would have welcomed a starting point of 7 million years ago to discuss the thorny issue of "aquatic" apes - which may be one of the explanations for our hairless, bi-pedal, and

perspiratory states, to say nothing of the strangely partitioned larynx - if only because it puts anthropologists into such a rage. Instead Tudge, a zoologist, is careful to give a fair and general account of the likely course of events based on fossil evidence and scientific proof. He does this with the conversational tone that a number of science writers have now mastered, but I have never read such a clear and cogent account of the proceedings.

Desert Depths

"Oh, no! Not another book about going off into the desert to find yourself. Yes! But this one is different. It's readable, witty, warm and totally unputdownable." Cindy Kent, Premier Radio.

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So why do Rolls-Royce drivers get so much grief? It's all down to the grille, apparently. By Jonathan Glancey

The Bentley really does command the road; you will never feel safer nor grander when out

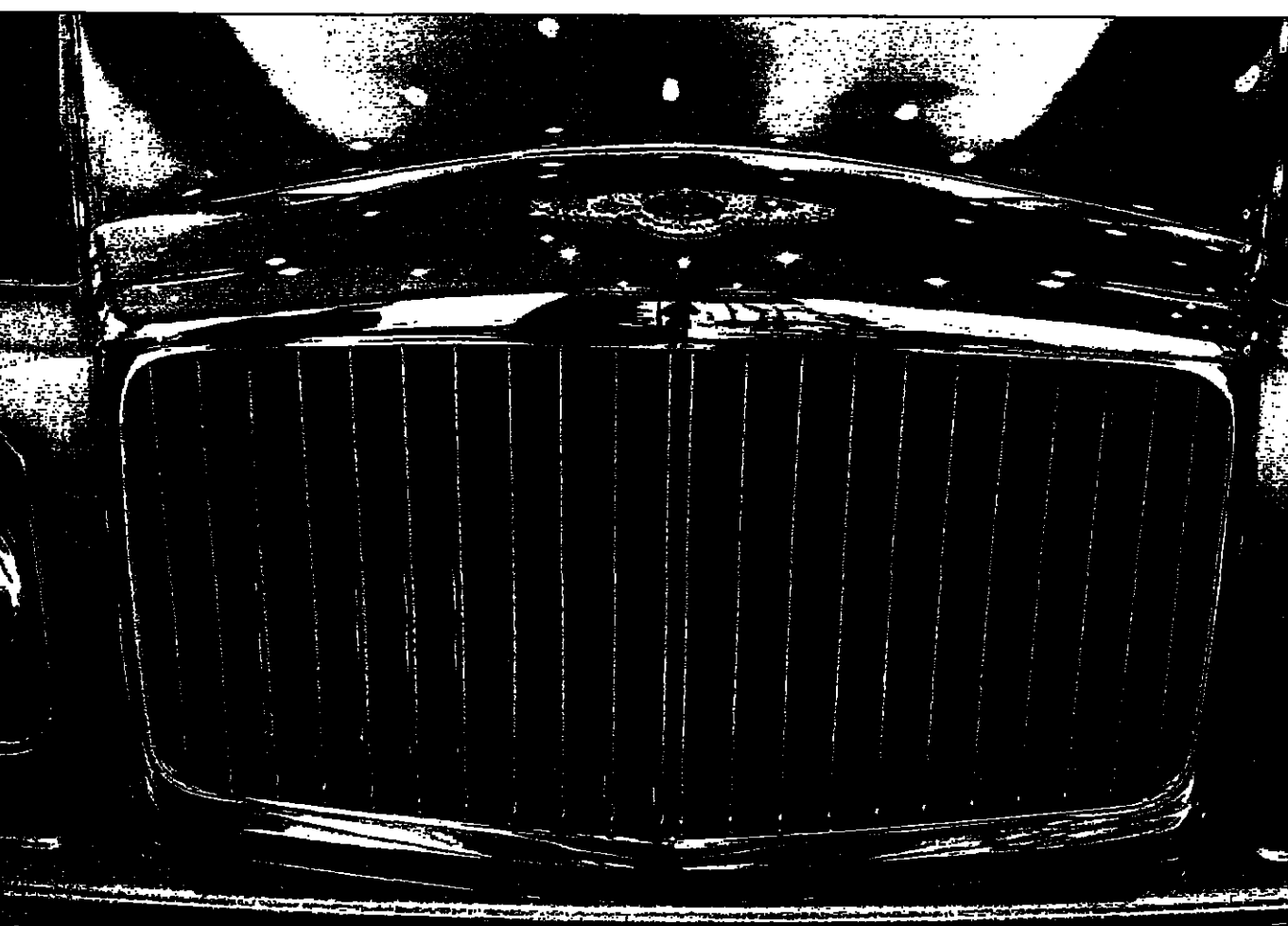


Photo: Gerant Lewis

Fascinated by the royal treatment I had

You will already have guessed what happened. Wherever I parked this handsome road carriage, I was met with the stock response "rich bastard" (once at a service station at Andover and once again, on the way

My advice, if, like my friend you are attracted by the idea of driving to work in a used Rolls-Royce, is to remove and store that famous stainless-steel radiator grille (save for trips to Berkeley Square, Cannes or Baden-Baden) and replace it with the much cheaper painted steel Bentley item. This seemingly insignificant quick-change act will transform you from a "rich bitch" into a someone to be respected. Absurd, but, sadly, all too true.

Alfa Romeo Spider

It's big — more a junior Mercedes SL than a contender in the MGF/Mazda MX-5 league. You may experience initial difficulty judging that beautiful body's extremes from the cockpit, and you will



Rivals

MGF 1.8 16v VVC 5-speed, £17,995. BMW Z3 1.9 5-speed, under £20,000 (to be announced). Mazda MX-5 1.8iS 5-speed £17,595. Saab 900 2.0iS 5-speed Convertible, £21,902.

need a fairly positive approach to gear changing.

Once accustomed to all that, you can begin to enjoy yourself. You have Alfa's excellent new twin-cam at your disposal, a normally civilised and tractable motor that will oblige with the usual high-rev delirium if required and a ride which, while not choppy, is the sort that reminds you that you're driving a motor car, not simply

My only serious beef, ignoring for a moment the absurdly large and rather ineffective windscreen wipers, is the steering. A little too light for my liking, the slight vagueness it suggests leaves you surprised when the car responds as quickly as it does. It also gives the impression that you are at the limits of grip long before you actually are.

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gardening

This weekend 16 million lawns will be fussed, fed and fretted over

...but is the effort, and are the pesticides, really necessary?
Anna Pavord extolls the virtues of the alternative, Freedom Lawn

Somebody somewhere is probably already writing a thesis on our relationship with lawns. "Man v Nature: rediscovering harmony", "Songs of the Sod: an Assessment of Mowing", "Striped State: Man, Machine and Mindset". I use the word "Man" optimistically, for I depend on having nothing to do with our lawn. My husband, who is gloriously unreconstructed, thinks that mowing is Man's Work. That is fine by me. I do not have great expectations of a lawn. I like it greenish and flatish. Daisies and blue flowered speedwell seem a positive benefit. Sometimes we have had sprinklings of violets in the lawn, too.

An American thesis on the subject has already been published in this country: *Redesigning the American Lawn* by F Herbert Bormann, Diana Balmori and Gordon T Geballe (Yale £7.95). Lawns there are even more of a fetish than they are here. Fences are frowned on, so lawns are rather public places. Whoever lets the side down by not mowing the sward in front of his house gets cross letters from the county authority reminding him of his duty as a citizen to keep the wilderness at bay.

Murray and Ann Blum of Athens, Georgia, refused to toe the line. To save face, the town council designated their unkempt one-acre garden a bird sanctuary and put up a large notice on one of their trees explaining this to the world at large. A picture from the Atlanta Journal shows Murray Blum laughing in his garden under the headline *The Yard From Hell*.

The authors argue for a less fascist approach to the garden lawn. "Properly" maintained (that is maintained according to the instructions issued by manufacturers of fertilisers, weedkillers, moss killers, lawn sand, lawn aerators, and the like) a lawn is a monoculture. The best kept lawns are those with the least diversity of plants; several million blades of fescue living in a botanical ghetto, untroubled by interlopers such as daisy or celandine.

Bormann and co are proponents of what they call The Freedom Lawn (as distinct from The Industrial Lawn, the one with no weeds). It sounds good to me. The Freedom Lawn, they say "results from an interaction of naturally recurring processes". I think that means you mow, but not too close. You leave the clippings to feed the lawn. You tolerate interlopers, as long as they do not get too bossy. I wage occasional war on lawn weeds with wide skirts, such

Grass: a user's guide

Here is a calendar of jobs to keep a reasonable family lawn in good fettle.

As soon as possible in April, rake out as much as possible of the moss and thatch in the lawn. If you have a large area to cover, you can hire a scarifier to do the job for you. Then treat the lawn with a moss killer combined with a fertiliser (the Japanese think moss gardens the height of refinement). Between April and October give the lawn one or possibly two treatments of a fertiliser combined with a weedkiller. Fisons Evergreen Weed and Feed Liquid or B&Q Triple Action Lawn Care are Gardening Which? Best Buys (goodbye to biodiversity). In October, spike and aerate the lawn to ease compaction. On a smallish lawn you can do this with a garden fork, wiggling it about after you have stuck it in the ground to open up the holes (The Freedom Lawn needs this too). Follow on with a sieved top dressing of sharp sand - not builder's sand - mixed half and half with garden soil. If your ground is heavy and sticky, increase the proportion of sand. If it is light and dries out quickly, add more soil, garden compost, or fine leaf mould to the mix. Spread a spadeful over each square yard of the lawn (top dressing is exhausting, but it is one of the best things you can do to lawns. Freedom or otherwise).

as dandelion, plantain and thistle, but it is quicker and far more satisfying to whip these out with a penknife than to spend hours like a donkey on a treadmill, walking up and down behind a spreader, scattering weedkiller.

Lawns cover 20 million acres of the US, making lawn grass the biggest single "crop" produced in the country. But the Americans, like us, moan about what farmers are doing to the environment, while, like us, spending millions on various chemicals to tip on to their own patches of ground. The National Academy of Science in the States discovered that homeowners use up to 10 times more chemical pesticides an acre than do farmers.

The arguments against The Industrial Lawn are ones we know already, but don't always care to take on board. There is the argument about the fossil fuels needed to power the ever increasing range of machines we are told we need to maintain our lawns: mowers, aerators, leaf blowers, trimmers. More fossil fuel is burnt up



transporting herbicides and chemical fertilisers from mines to factories and garden centres.

We shrug and say, "Well our lawn machines don't use much petrol". That's true, but the two-stroke engine is a dirty, wasteful converter of fuel to energy. There is, as yet, no legal requirement to fit catalytic converters to lawnmower engines, although its relative inefficiency means that, for each horse power produced, it creates 50 times more pollution than a long distance lorry. Or, to put it another way, if it takes you one hour to mow your lawn with a petrol-driven lawnmower, you will have produced as much air pollution as if you had driven 350 miles in your car.

Another argument for The Freedom Lawn has to do with a different kind of pollution, as excess fertilisers and pesticides wash off our lawns into springs and streams. Then there is the problem of water shortage. Our obsession with the greenness of a lawn tempts us to water them in a dry summer, such as we had last year. Hose pipe bans are difficult to police. But if you

leave it alone, with the first rain a lawn will green up of its own accord.

Part of the problem is that our expectations of our lawns (and much else in the garden) are unrealistically high. We expect them to be perfect and unblemished, whatever the prevailing conditions. That can become a fetish.

The creed of The Freedom Lawn will be an anathema to the fanatical acolytes for whom a single daisy can be cause for hara-kiri. These are more likely to be men than women. Perhaps it is the ritual that attracts: the weekly cut, the edge clipping, the stripes. The need for stripes is particularly intriguing, but deeply ingrained enough for Flymo to have introduced a Hoverstripe mower that stripes as it cuts as it hovers. Before, only cylinder mowers and some types of rotary mower gave the desired effect.

This weekend, our lawn will get its first cut. That is late, but the weather has been so cold, the grass has scarcely been growing. And this

weekend another 16 million lawns in the UK will be fussed and fretted over, fed, spiked, raked and rolled. If you do everything that you are told to do to a lawn in a year, it can become the most demanding area of the garden. The most expensive, too.

However much you do on top to a lawn, its appearance, ultimately, is most affected by what is going on underneath: fertility and drainage. If the underpinning is not ideal, as is often the case, then fertilisers, herbicides and moss treatments can only ever be props. Not cures.

Low nutrient levels and poor drainage are the usual causes of moss build-up. Mowing too close also has a bad effect. The cut shouldn't be closer than 15mm (about three quarters of an inch). Compaction, where the lawn is heavily used for games, bike riding, football, will also promote moss at the expense of grass.

Whatever the benefits to the environment, I don't expect great support for The Freedom Lawn. Here, badly kept grass is a moral slur.

WEEKEND WORK

There have been some desiccating north-easterly winds blowing recently. Wind dries out foliage faster than sun and is particularly difficult for newly planted evergreens to cope with. Spray them regularly with water or rig up plastic mesh windbreaks until the plants are well established.

Delphiniums are growing at last and need to be gently tied in to canes with soft twine. The sappy growths are very brittle. You will get bigger spikes of flower if you thin out the weaker shoots. Slugs are pokey about delphiniums. Protect plants if necessary.

Peonies also need staking. The prettiest (and most effective) way to do this is to weave a lobster pot of twigs around and over the clumps. Hazel or willow are the traditional materials to use. But if you have dogwood stems

to cut down (see last week's Weekend Work) you can use them instead.

Think about restocking ponds with fish and plants. Fish like to stir around in the soil that the pond plants are set in, but a thick layer of gravel on top of the compost will deter them. Put this on before you lower plants into their final positions.

Continue to sow seed of flowers for planting out later in spring. I have just sown seed of *Convolvulus* 'Flagship Mixed' (Mr Fothergill £1.35), which should be flowering by July. It has the sort of trumpet flowers you would expect, but comes in a wide range of colours: dark and pale blue, pink and red, all with a white throat. They grow about 12-15in tall and are ideal for tubs and window boxes. This convolvulus is a favourite of hover-flies. They are worth attracting because they gobble up aphids.

On the trail of hardy mimosas

By Anna McKane

At this time of year, when so much pink and white blossom is about, rounding a corner and coming upon a mimosa, with its masses of fluffy bright yellow flowers cascading from the arched branches, stops you in your tracks. Mimosas evoke a ray of Thirties world of extended out-of-season stays on the Cote d'Azur. It seems to go with neatly pressed yachting clothes and lounging on teak steamer chairs. But some mimosas are pretty hardy, so you don't have to be very rich or live in the south of France to keep them happy.

Several will live in warm sheltered corners, while others will survive in cool glasshouses. The small spherical flowers, which grow in huge clusters, are actually made up entirely of stamens: mimosa flowers have no petals. Some mimosas have no leaves, either. The leaf-like structures are phyllodes, flattened triangular leaf stalks which grow straight on the branches.

Acacia dealbata, the silver wattle, is one of the easiest to obtain and easiest to grow in this country. It is the same one which is often seen by the side of the road in the south of France. The Mediterranean mimosas can blossom at other times, too. They have fern-like silvery leaves and their scent makes up for the rather harsh yellow flowers.

Acacia dealbata is worth trying in a sheltered spot anywhere in the south of England, where it can grow to 30 feet. In suitable conditions, mimosas grow fast: at Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Gardens in Dorset they grow some species from seed - in less than a year these are three feet tall and ready to sell.

There are 1,500 different species of *Acacia*, all of which originated in Australia and Africa. Many need enough room to grow into a small tree, will sink if they are cut down too much, and won't stand frost - so there is a limited choice for gardeners without double-height conservatories.

If you're on the trail of hardy mimosas you could try *A. retinodes*. This is an attractive tree with narrow willow-like leaves, which flowers in late summer. But the best of all is probably *A. pravissima*.

This is one which has phyllodes instead of leaves. They are silvery-grey and arrow shaped, growing all along the branches, so they make good cut foliage even without the flowers. The flowers are a softer yellow than the silver wattle, and clusters of them are slightly smaller. They are spread all along the branches, so rather than making a solid block of yellow, the overall effect is of a mingled yellow and soft green. The branches flow in elegant arches, and seen from underneath, with a backdrop of a clear spring sky, the effect is totally magical. My plant flowered in January last year, but this year it is just about to flower as late as April, presumably because of the cold weather at the beginning of the year.



For a glasshouse, one of the best is *A. baileyana*. It has frond-like, blue-grey leaves, and clusters of flowers in the early spring. Several nurseries now offer a cultivar, *A. baileyana Purpurea*, which has a mauve tinge to the young shoots. It needs the shelter of a conservatory, and a large pot of John Innes No 3, plus regular feeding. *Acacias* are part of the pea family, and produce a certain amount of nitrogen on their roots, so they don't need quite so much feeding as some other pot-grown shrubs. As Roger Clark, of Green-

Mimosas flowers have no petals but are made up entirely of stamens
Photograph: Garden Picture Library

way Gardens near Brixham in Devon explained, they need well drained soil, and plenty of room to grow. If they are cut back too much it may prevent them from flowering freely.

As with many other plants, trial and error is proving that more and more mimosas will survive in this country. A flower which 20 or 30 years ago we expected to see only on holiday, is now being persuaded to thrive here. And as growers experiment with species, we can expect the range of mimosas to widen over the next few years.

Greenway Gardens, Churston Ferrers, Brixham, Devon TQ5 0ES (01803 842 382) and Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Gardens, Abbotsbury, Nr Weymouth, Dorset DT3 4LA (01305 871412) both specialise in unusual and tender trees and shrubs and have several mimosas on their lists.

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CUTTINGS

There are 50 different kinds of narcissi in bloom at a private garden in West Sussex. It is open to the public this weekend

The Alpine Garden Society is holding a show in Nottingham today (11.30am-4.30pm) at the Arnold and Carlton College of Further Education, Digby Avenue. Mappery. Alpines are in full flood now. Look for saxifrage, primulas of many kinds, lewisias, iris, fritillaries, ferns and dwarf shrubs. There will be plants for sale. Admission £1.

Specialist aspects of gardening, such as water gardening, landscaping and propagation are part of a week long course entitled Aspects of Gardening, which is being offered to ambitious gardeners, at the Royal

Botanic Garden, Kew. Tutors include Rupert Golby, who will talk about the decorative kitchen garden and Dr Glenys Dawkins whose speciality is gardening for wildlife. The course includes visits to Nymans and Denmans gardens in Sussex and to the kitchen garden of the Manor aux Quar' Saisons in Oxfordshire. The course runs from 24-28 June, fee £245. Enrolment forms and further details from the Education Department, RBG, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB (0181-332 5626).

Today 20 gardens in Felpham, West Sussex are open (10am-6pm) in aid of

the village's St Mary's Centre. At the centre itself you can get coffee, home-made lunch and tea in between garden visits. At Deepdene, 38 South Drive, there is a hundred foot shrubbery with arches leading to quiet areas of ferns and rhododendrons. At Sandy Lodge, 10 Davenport Road, the garden has twice been washed away by high tides, but there are still 50 different kinds of narcissi in bloom. Produce and preserves will be on sale at 41 Ley Road, where the owners have a sheltered walled garden with a productive vegetable plot. Admission £2.50.

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Above: Iolo Williams on the trail of the thieves (photo: Rob Stratton); left: a red kite (photo: Planet Earth); and (above right) a peregrine's eggs (photo: Dennis Green)

INSIDE THE MIND OF AN EGG THIEF

● Eggs have no commercial value. Usually they are gloated over privately – although occasionally other enthusiasts may be invited for a viewing.
● One man was caught in 1989, holding 16,500 illegal eggs.
● The RSPB has 500 known collectors on its database. Most eggers keep scrupulous records. One apprehended recently had diaries dating back 10 years, complete with grid references to important nest sites, clutch sizes and laying dates. He revisited the same areas on almost exactly the same day annually.
● The red-backed shrike was probably finally exterminated in Britain by collectors. The last regular pairs disappeared in 1988.
● True eggers take all the nest contents – particularly large clutches or strangely-marked eggs, removing embryos by piping in acid and syringing out the contents.

The egger's favourites

● Ravens (5,000 pairs): early March raids on these, the first layers, double as reconnaissance for future raids
● Scottish golden eagles (420 pairs): late March
● Welsh red kites (160 pairs): early April
● Choughs (280 pairs) – our rarest crows, nesting on Welsh and Scottish cliffs: late April
● Scottish red- and black-throated divers (1,400 and 155 pairs respectively): highly prized because of their beautiful eggs: May
● Ospreys (100 pairs) – no longer as rare as they were in the 1950s, but their eggs remain highly valued for the markings, eight clutches were lost in 1995: May
● Dotted larks (155 pairs) – moorland waders from the Arctic are raided in Scotland: May/June
● Avocets (500 pairs) – the RSPB emblem: May/June
● Gull Bunting (230 pairs) – fast declining in the West Country: May/June

The man who hunts the egg thieves

Iolo Williams stays up all night at this time of year. He's guarding the rare birds of Wales By Daniel Butler

A couple of years ago we had a tip-off about eggers from the Midlands after rookeries. We had to wait on an Anglesey beach all night: in the end we caught them at about half past four in the morning. That sort of thing can happen any time from March to July.

Iolo Williams seems remarkably calm about the coming four months of sleepless nights and often futile waits, but that's not surprising – his mind is on other things. As he speaks his eyes are upturned, scouring the surrounding trees while rooks caw in the valley below. We are in "a known goshawk wood" in mid-Wales at the beginning of his working year – spring.

As species officer for the RSPB in Wales, Mr Williams is responsible for protecting many of Britain's rarest birds and the breeding season is by far the busiest time of year. "It kicks off properly in April," he says. "We're most interested in red kites, but it usually starts with ravens. They're earliest of all and collectors come in March to watch other birds pairing up. While pinning down kite nests for a later raid, they collect ravens' eggs – get their hand in, so to speak."

Williams tries to be first to identify potential nests. This allows him to mount guards: "We

divide Wales up between about 20 unpaid kite wardens who range from retired people to a solicitor," he explains.

Once the sites have been found, the most vulnerable birds may have to be helped: "Eggers care nothing for birds and nothing for the countryside," he continues. "As far as I'm concerned, egg-collecting is nothing short of mindless vandalism."

Worse, eggs are valued in direct proportion to the rarity of the bird – and kites are among the rarest. Well-known nests have to be watched, in some cases 24 hours a day. This seems to be working well: "We have got away lightly the past few years because the army has helped guard nests and the thieves know it," says Williams. "So far we've only lost a couple, but before that it was anything up to 10 a year."

Mind you, even if a clutch hatches, more help may be needed. Kites are notoriously bad parents – one pair, for example, persistently nests above a lay-by every year, only to desert their young as the tourist season begins. So the chicks have to be hand-reared and returned to the wild later. But the effort is worthwhile – kites have increased from 15 individuals at the turn of the century to last year's 120 pairs. "This year I expect to find more than 140," Williams smiles.

Eggers, though, are not the only villains. Thieves steal peregrines to sell to falconers while pigeon fanciers often blame peregrines for high losses among their flocks. Williams comes in for his share of hatred, too. A few years ago he found a peregrine eyrie where the clutch had been replaced with hens' eggs. "The words 'Fuck you Iolo' were written on them in lipstick – I know who did it and he's not a man to be tangled with."

Williams stiffens: "There we are – that's it." He points to an untidy mass against a larch trunk. "This is an active goshawk nest," he says confidently. "And it was used last year, too – look here's a bit of shell."

Pleased to have pin-pointed the nest, he explains that the breeding season is the only time when a census can be taken of many rarities such as these goshawks. He also counts more familiar birds: "Common species are important environmental indicators," he says. "For example, lapwings have dropped from 7,000 pairs to well under 1,000 pairs in just eight years, and skylarks are becoming rare in lowland areas."

Every spring Williams recruits fieldworkers for RSPB studies: "This year we're surveying the Brecon Beacons to find ways of making

money in the uplands without sheep," he says. "And we're doing a farmland study to check the value of environmental subsidies."

Although much of the groundwork is delegated to others, it results in long hours for Williams, too: "I don't expect to be in the office more than twice a week," he says. "If I ask someone to be up at dawn then the least I can do is to be out there too, particularly because we're increasingly using volunteers."

From March to July the day begins horribly early: "If you're monitoring black grouse, for example, you're up at 2am to catch the males displaying at dawn. Then I'll spend five or six hours with my field workers. Afterwards I'll aim for an early night, but of course it doesn't always work out like that because owls and nightjars need to be counted in the evening."

In spite of the energy he puts into his work, his efforts are frustrated by factors beyond his control. Overgrazing is worst: "There were 4 million sheep in Wales before the war – now there are 11.7 million," he says. "The result is fields as smooth as a bowling green and a huge loss of heather."

The answer lies in cutting back on sheep numbers, says Williams, but the problem is

more complicated than that: "Rural communities are the backbone of our culture," he says. "We don't want to lose that, but we want the birds back. We should get the farming unions together with our policy people and work out solutions together."

As the year progresses, the pressures to be out and about reduce, but the hours remain long: "The fieldwork eases off in July, but then I'm busy writing up reports, after which I plan next year's research and working out budgets."

He pauses by the car parked inconspicuously in a lay-by: "I love my job, in spite of its drawbacks – I'm captain of the local rugby club, but there's precious little time for games." There are other disadvantages, too, such as the 2am call from the police one Sunday morning: "They'd searched a car and wanted me to identify some eggs. I'd had a few beers with the team and was over the limit, but they were insistent and a squad car came 40 miles to pick me up. Now for five months of the year I can't even have a drink at the weekend."

Nor does he get paid overtime to compensate for the hours, but Williams doesn't mind: "Doing something I believe in while being out and about in such a beautiful country is bonus enough," he says, his eyes still glued to the skies.

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Settle an argument, will you?" said the tourist to the man in the craft shop. "Those fires on the mountain – have they been started on purpose?"

The man replied that the blazes were deliberate: shepherds were burning off old heather, as they always do in winter and early spring. Yet the tourist's curiosity was understandable, for the conflagrations were so numerous that half the hillsides seemed to be going up in smoke.

Out there in the Western Highlands, the weather was stunning. The sun blazed down, and only a cool breeze saved hill-walkers from overheating. For casual visitors, this seemed a perfect climate. But local people were all obsessed by one subject: drought.

Lochs were at an alarmingly low level, burns reduced to a trickle, and the surface of the land was as dry as tinder. Walking up into the great wilderness of Letterewe, north of Loch Maree, I felt a sense of unease, brought on by the way the dead grass crunched underfoot and only trickles of water wound their way down the rocky burn-channels.



DUFF HART-DAVIS

It was in those very hills, that Frank Fraser Darling did the research for his celebrated book *A Herd of Red Deer*. In it he described how he spent the summer of 1935 living outdoors and walking barefoot – a practice which put him in far closer touch with the environment. Yet he also recorded how he found some places in the hills so alarming that he had to move out at nightfall, and how his sojourn in that "grey, broken country" made him intensely aware of "the ephemeral nature of individual man".

So it remains today. The immense antiquity of the mountains can strike dread into your soul – and worries about global warming heighten the sensation of man's impermanence. It so happened I had just read a report of an International Science Festival in Edinburgh, at

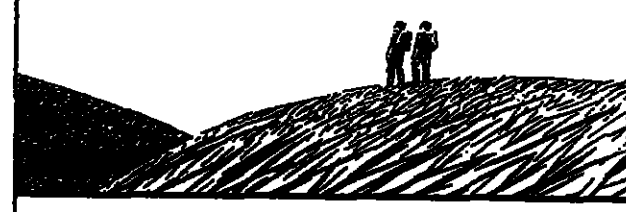
which one speaker revealed that the remains of fossilised plants 520 millions of years old have been found in Scotland, and that the earliest known vertebrates crawled on to land in Morayshire 368 million years ago – developments brought about by the sea and air being tropically warm then.

Scientists dispute whether or not our climate is heading back in that direction; but hill-walkers are surrounded by evidence of relatively short-term meteorological change. The mountains of Wester Ross are now almost devoid of trees, but still in the sides of peat-hags you can see ancient roots, relics of the Caledonian forest which grew up after the glaciers of the last ice age had pulled back, perhaps 10,000 years ago.

Man played a part in the massacre of that forest. But the principal agent of destruction was the climate, which turned progressively colder and wetter, gradually degrading the soil and laying down a blanket of infertile peat. Which way are we heading now? I defy anyone to predict what Letterewe will look like 10,000 years hence.

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LEEPING AROUND: TART HERE

The most disturbing aspect of modern travel is the convergence towards uniformity. Nowhere is this more evident than in the hotel room. Your Holiday Inn experience should provide the same depth of mattress, shade of bland wallpaper and smiling receptionist whether you are in Leeds or Lhasa. As these two pages demonstrate, there are fortunately plenty of alternatives to the march of en suite uniformity. But for those who want to stay somewhere really different, I propose the following. The Hilton Hotel stands alongside the main Mbarara-Kampala highway in western Uganda: not, however, a member of the illustrious chain, but a one-room shack which specialises less in accommodation than in tea and beer. If you drift off under the influence of the latter, then a dusty corner will no doubt be found for you. But you might be better off shifting continents to find a

bed for the night. Forty pence buys you a night in a stables in a two-horse town in the highlands of Guatemala. The site has been converted into rooms for paying guests, who can presumably afford 4 quetzales more easily than can the horses, who fortunately have been evicted. Their aroma lingers, and has permeated every fraying thread of the blanket which insulates you from a plastic mattress. Double glazing is not a feature; indeed glazing is not a feature. The rate, by the way, is for a double. More economical still, roll up at the creaky old hotel in Gibara, Cuba, close to where Columbus made landfall on the island. If it is full, the receptionist insists that "You will have to stay at my house". She does this as firmly as (later) she declines payment for the room. I've not heard of that happening at the Holiday Inn

Simon Calder

That elusive, smart and affordable hotel is only just around the corner — if you know where to look

By Justine Hardy

There is no reason why we cannot find beautiful places to stay and eat without causing a financial haemorrhage but usually such places are kept closely guarded secrets. Overheard snippets can be very rewarding. When travelling, I've found that simply by listening to the right conversations you can pick up ideas that open up a world of exquisite houses, tiny hotels and unique restaurants: places that are affordable, where you don't have to make do with darning into grand hotel lobbies in a nervous hunt for rich folks' lofts.

There is a house where the giant swags of red velvet curtain in the hall came originally from the Doge's Palace in Venice, the rooms are panelled with Burmese teak, the recipe for muffs comes from Mrs Beeton's *Cook Book* and the current owner's accent is delicate north India circa 1950. The Raja of Karpurthala bought the Viceroy's Secretary's house, Simla, North India, in 1938 and the clock stopped then. Reggie, the current owner, is the Raja's grandson and he has made Chapsee House a microcosm of a gentler time.

In 1996, nothing at Chapsee House indicates that Rudyard Kipling's rabbit warren bazaar do not throb and buzz just out of earshot. No one else was staying when I was there; I sat in solitary splendour on the terrace, my tea served in Limoges china accompanied by Mrs Beeton's muffs. I sipped contentedly looking out over the foothills of the Himalayas. Indoors a houseboy was on standby next to the bridge table just in case a playing four, requesting gin fizz, suddenly materialised from a pocket of the past. His cap and white gloves were perfect whether he was delivering the bed tea at 8am or bringing me a china hot water bottle just before midnight.

Chapsee is rare but not unique. Up on a hill beyond the smog of downtown Istanbul perches the Pera Palace. Little has changed since it was built as an attempt to soften the blow of arriving in Istanbul for travellers from the Orient Express. A delicate blanket of gentility has settled over the hotel where

Agatha Christie famously lost 11 days of her life in room 411. Silver and crystal still shimmer and clink as the old world takes tea regardless of terrorist action elsewhere in the city.

Equally romantic and cocooned in the past is the Old Winter Palace Hotel in Luxor. Its setting is dreamy — you gaze out over the Nile — and its elegance seems to flow from its old-fashioned features of carriage drive and swooping staircase. Every evening I sat in the garden under an oleander tree and looked out over the Nile to the Theban Mountain. As in Istanbul, the attitude of the national extremist terrorist groups means that life for tourists is not totally secure but, there are plus points in that this does give good bargaining power.

Sometimes it is better to start this value for money charm hunt closer to home. I found Wesley House on a desperate search on a dark and windy night. I was simply looking for somewhere cheap and cheerful to stay when I came across this gem. It sits plumb in the middle of the honeycomb-cottage belt of corpulent Gloucestershire. Every sheep baa on cue and every blackberry is just so at plucking time. The comfort, food and attention to whim are faultless. Here plump sofas meet herbaceous border, the marinated olives are better than in Positano and the country walking is a straight take on a wander through a rural idyll.

However if, for some reason, the sound of these places fails to appeal, make sure you listen to your fellow passengers next time you're on a bus or train. You never know what secret hotels you may discover.

Chapsee House, Simla can be booked direct on 00 91 177 202 542 or through Distant Frontiers in Delhi (00 91 11 685 8857); Pera Palace, Mesutiyet Caddesi 98/100, Harbiye, Istanbul (00 90 1 251 4560); The Old Winter Palace Hotel, Sharia el Nil, Luxor (00 20 95 580422); Wesley House, High Street, Winchcombe (01242 602366). Justine Hardy's book, *The Ochre Palace* (Constable) appears in paperback in July.



top: Wesley House: 'the comfort, food and attention are faultless' bottom: Chapsee House, Simla, North India

Photos: William Curtis

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SIMON CALDER

Trying to help or trying it on? Adrian West of north London suspects the latter of Country Holidays, part of the Thomson group.

"My wife and I have had many successful cottage holidays in Britain and abroad. This year, for the first time, we used the brochure of Country Holidays. We chose the cottage we wanted, and booked it over the telephone.

"I was surprised to find, when the booking confirmation came, that the cost of the holiday included both personal insurance and cancellation insurance. This has never been our experience with any other company. The charge for personal insurance was just a try-on — I didn't have to take it. The cancellation insurance was compulsory unless I

obtained equivalent cover elsewhere and provided the company with written details of my insurer and the policy number.

Mr West believes the personal cover is a clear case of inertia selling: "We are already covered for normal risks, and a week spent less than 200 miles from home presents no special hazards."

Regarding the cancellation charge: "Surely it cannot be any concern of Country Holidays whether or not I am able to take a holiday for which I have already paid. The truth of the matter seems to be that the company is not content with being a letting agent, but thinks it has a captive market as an insurance agent. I think this is sharp practice."

Country Holidays says it routinely offers both cancellation and personal insurance. "If personal insurance is not required, and cancellation insurance is obtained from another source, the matter is not pressed." Cancellation insurance is needed "to protect both the customer and the property owner. This is to ensure in the event of the holiday being cancelled the customer obtains a full refund of the cost of their holiday and the property owner is assured of payment from Country Holidays."

You might think the company, as part of a group which makes much of the fact that it has assets of £6 billion, could afford to be more generous to the property owner in the event of cancellation.

Elvis Presley is travelling all over Europe from a base in Vienna. The singer lends his name to a Boeing 737 which is otherwise known by the unwieldy title OE-LNH, belonging to Lauda Air of Austria. Nikki Lauda, the airline's flamboyant racing-driver founder, has named his fleet after rock stars. Elvis is accompanied by Bob Marley, John Lennon and Janis Joplin, which must be the ultimate fantasy a cappella band. I am all in favour of more imaginative names than OE-LNH, but unfortunately for an airline, the other thread that binds these stars is that they died too young — as did the people celebrated in Lauda Air's 767 fleet, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean and the recently deceased racing driver, Ayrton Senna.

While the world's airlines are projecting a public image of ever-greater comfort and attention aboard their planes, they can be rather less polite when talking among themselves. This week I overheard staff at a gate at Gatwick being told by walkie-talkie that "three hags are on the way" — a reference to late or "Have A Go" passengers, rather than their appearance.

Once on board, you and me become unwitting members of a "trapped audience". I learn this from the BBC staff newspaper, which reveals that the Corporation has appointed an executive named Colin Jarvis to a new job. He was to be manager for Trapped Audiences, until he persuaded the BBC to adopt the title of head of Inflight Entertainment.

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Landmark Trust, the charity that
rents out whacky buildings.
By Angela Humphery



left: Tixall Gatehouse. Built in 1850 by Sir Walter Aston, this Elizabethan structure once imprisoned Mary Queen of Scots
above: the Gothic Temple, Stowe. Built in 1741 for Lord Cobham

Who in their right mind would want to holiday in a hospital, take a break in a blockhouse or in a house of correction? In a pigsty or in a pineapple? Down a mine or up a water-tower?

Since we began renting holiday accommodation from the Landmark Trust two and a half years ago we've stayed in six such buildings, looked at a further six, and have just booked up for our seventh. These architectural gems had all fallen into disrepair but were rescued, repaired, renovated and refurbished by the Landmark Trust, which has just celebrated its 30th birthday. This architectural charity offers self-catering holidays in addresses to die for—castles and châteaux, priories and palaces, chapels and colleges, abbeys and an Admiralty Lookout, manor houses, banqueting houses and gatehouses, a Government House and a "White House".

Our very first Landmark experience was the Martens Tower at Aldeburgh in Suffolk. Short

and squat, it stands four-square on the sea wall, the largest and most northerly of the chain of towers put up to keep Napoleon out. Built in the shape of a quatrefoil for four heavy guns, it is made up of nearly one million bricks and looks like a gigantic sandcastle. There's a drawbridge and half a moat (the other half having disappeared into the sea) while up on the flat roof, from which guns were once fired, you can gaze up at the stars.

Our second was the Gothic Temple at Stowe in Buckinghamshire and our very first sighting of it was through a grey November mist. Standing on high ground, surrounded by sheep, this imposing triangular temple of red sandstone was built in 1741 and is one of the last additions to the garden formed for Lord Cobham of Stowe.

We took yet another tower for our third "Landmark". Luttrell's Tower at Eaglehurst near Southampton is tall and elegant, standing on the shores of the Solent looking towards Cowes. It was used by Marconi for his wireless experiments in 1912 and is an exceptionally fine

Georgian edifice with spectacular views from the top floor living room of ships entering and leaving Southampton.

Next was a castle, an awe inspiring experience and far from run-of-the-mill self-catering. Clytha Castle is a Georgian hilltop folly overlooking the Vale of Usk in the Welsh Marches, surrounded by ancient war-torn ruins of real castles such as Raglan and Chepstow. Gros-mont, Skenfrith and White, Tretower and Caerphilly. Leased from the National Trust, it stands on the edge of a grove of old chestnuts, fronted by a ha-ha to keep out the sheep which graze on the slopes below.

It was then off to hospital—Beamsley Hospital near Skipton in Yorkshire, a single storey circular stone building that was built as an almshouse in 1593. It had rooms for seven women, encircling a chapel, through which most of them had to pass to reach their doors—a daily encouragement to piety. Until the 1970s the little community of Mother and Sisters lived here, their lives governed by ancient and ferociously strict

rules. Using its oddly shaped rooms and repeatedly crossing the chapel was a curious experience.

It is always exciting the first time you turn the front-door key of a Landmark property, not knowing quite what to expect. Seeing pictures in the handbook is not the same thing as actually setting foot inside one of these weird and wonderful buildings. And our last folly to date, Tixall Gatehouse, was no exception. Built in 1580 by Sir Walter Aston to stand in front of an older house which has since disappeared, it is a magnificent Elizabethan structure deep in the heart of Staffordshire. Standing alone on high ground, stark grey and four-square with a turret in each corner, it is said to have a ghost. We thought said ghost might be Mary, Queen of Scots, who was imprisoned here for two weeks in 1586.

The property was bought by the trust in 1968 for £300 and was one of the very first historic buildings they rescued and restored. Today the roof is paved with stone and from here, surrounded by balustrades and turret tops, there are wonderful views over the parkland (land-

scaped by Capability Brown) down to the canal where a section has been dug out to form a lake known as Tixall Wide.

In one of the turrets lives the gatehouse clock. It is locked away since it has no hands or face. To show this is of no matter, the working mechanism merely strikes the hour and half hour which it does with perfect precision. Wake up call at Tixall is 7am sharp but happily there's a timing device so that the clock doesn't strike between the hours of 11 and seven.

To book a property you need the Landmark Handbook. It costs £8.50 (inc. p&p—cost refundable against booking) from The Landmark Trust, Shottesbrooke, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3SW (01628 825925). Prices vary according to property and season. Midwinter short stays (four nights Nov-March) are the cheapest and for Clytha Castle, Beamsley Hospital and Tixall Gatehouse prices start from £403, £266 and £364 respectively.

Traditions of Arabia



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travel adventure

Where compasses fear to point

David Hempleman-Adams suggested something really stupid. Graham Hoyland followed

In the beginning there were three of us: David, Rebecca and me. David Hempleman-Adams had just become the first Briton to walk to the South Pole, solo and unsupported. And like Rebecca Stephens and me, he'd climbed Mount Everest in 1993. Now, just days afterwards, he was suggesting something I knew was really stupid.

"Why don't you come, Graham? Rebecca and I are taking a yacht down to the Magnetic South Pole. No one's ever done both in one season."

This was madness. The Southern Ocean is a savage sea. How would we avoid hitting the icebergs? And what was the Magnetic South Pole, anyway? Simply put, it's where all the compasses in the world don't point. An imaginary entity, it roams the seas off the coast of Antarctica as unpredictably as the albatrosses that live there. We'd have to locate it by satellite navigation, compasses don't work.

My motive for going was to see whether I was capable of achieving a long-nursed plan to sail non-stop

around the world on each of the seven seas and climb the highest mountain on each continent: the seven summits. This has never been done before. Having climbed what are probably the two hardest mountains, Everest and McKinley, now it was time to try what is certainly the most ferocious of the seven seas.

So that's how we ended up on *Spirit of Sydney*, a 60ft aluminium retired racing yacht based in Hobart, Tasmania. This was like three yachtsies turning up at Everest and asking for a guided tour to the top. However, there were also three professional crew, as well as David's father-in-law, Ron, who was a proper sailor.

We attempted to leave land three times before the yacht was even half ready for sea. That set the tone. On the trip holes appeared in the soft metal of the hull - devoured by electrolytic corrosion, so the bilges started to fill with water. We felt sea-sick nearly all the time. The skipper had the three incompetent climbers under his eye on C watch. Somehow the

mainsail ripped when half a ton of ice froze on it. All the fresh water in the tanks froze solid because we were sailing through sea-water at -1C. During a storm one night a wave came on board, cut some heavy ropes and stole the life-raft, not leaving a sign.

In my bunk, an 18-inch-wide bookshelf. I tried to sleep, not believing the violence of the sea. A vertiginous swoop of the bows. A surruration of water heard through the hull plates and *slam!* we hit a wave and *slam!* again. I hit the ceiling of my bunk so hard that for the first time in my life I sustained an injury in bed.

Cooking was an athletic process: dancing in front of a gas cooker, juggling with pans. Ron and I engaged in an unspoken competition to cook the most exotic cuisine possible at sea. We overdid this eventually and the gas ran out, resulting in a spirit stove being pressed into service.

But we got there. We landed on Antarctica, an ice-bound shore of penguins and eternal winds. We saw the hut where the yacht's owner and

his wife had spent a year. We sailed for two sunny days, through icebergs sitting in a calm blue sea like a home fleet of dreadnoughts. And we found the Magnetic South Pole at three in the morning last 20 February. It seemed to be a patch of ocean much like the other 3,000 miles we sailed. But above our heads the Southern Lights shimmered from horizon to horizon like a vast green curtain hanging down from space.

And the best bit? I'll never forget the time we three Everesters were crouched in the cockpit in the last 65-knot gale. Violent storm force 11, it would have said on Radio 4. I was steering, the mainsail had just ripped for the second time, and we were careering down the backs of 45ft breakers. This moment was so exhilarating that everything seemed to be happening in a slow dream. Like climbing, the danger sharpens your senses to a degree you never experience in nominal life. It's sailing, so you're cold, wet and sea-sick. But you feel very, very alive.



Rebecca Stephens at Antarctica Photo: Graham Hoyland

The Wildest Dreams travel challenge

For anyone aged between 18 and 35 there are only a couple of weeks left to apply for funding for your wildest travel dream. Heineken, in association with the *Independent*, is offering up to £25,000 to help those in search of adventure, but the closing date is 26 April.

How to enter

Application forms are available by calling the special hotline number 0171-231 5432, or through the Lonely Planet Internet <http://www.lonelyplanet.com.au>; or from STA Travel shops.

How much is the prize?

Heineken has a total bursary of £25,000 but the awards are at the judges' discretion. They may decide that several travel projects deserve funding, or they may feel one exceptional proposal (say a tour of the 177 countries where Heineken Export is available) should win the full amount...

Give the family a taste of France this Whitsun

The Whitsun school holiday at the end of May is just a few weeks away. What better than a week in France - visit Disneyland Paris or Le Mont-St-Michel in Brittany. Over 100 top sites from Normandy to the Côte d'Azur with our own modern mobile homes (showers) or fully-equipped Superiors.

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WORLD DEPARTURES

Unlimited travel airfares are not as widely available as once they were, but three countries still offer them. Ansett New Zealand (0171-434 4071) has a "Scenic Standby" airpass giving unlimited flights throughout the airline's network. Two weeks' travel costs NZ\$699 (about £300), while a month is NZ\$999 (about £430). Canadian Regional has launched a NationalPass which costs £189 for a week, £239 for two weeks, and allows unlimited travel from Montreal to the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia. The pass also allows travel into the US, to Washington DC and Seattle. It must be bought in advance from AirPass Sales (01737 555300). This replaces the previous airpasses

offered by Air Ontario and AirBC. The same company also sells a Horizon Air standby pass. It covers the cities on the US West Coast and northern Rocky Mountain states served by this airline, which is a subsidiary of Alaska Airlines.

The Venezuelan national airline Viasa, which is part of the Iberia group, is offering a number of late-availability deals to South America in April. Return flights to Lima and Quito are priced at around £450 through specialist agents such as Journey Latin America (0181-747 3108), Passage to South America (0171-602 9889) and South American Experience (0171-976 5511). Flights are on Viasa from

Heathrow, with a free stopover in Caracas if required. A ticket to the Colombian capital, Bogotá, is available for around £420 return. Bogotá is the third airport to be added to the US Department of Transportation's blacklist. Eldorado International Airport is deemed not to "maintain and administer effective security measures. It joins Lagos and Manila on the list. Cartagena is widely regarded as the most perfectly preserved Spanish colonial city in Latin America. You can visit the Colombian city with Sunvil Discovery (0181-568 8330) as an add-on to a Costa Rica holiday. The extra cost for three or four nights is around £320, on top of about £1,400 for a one-week tour of Costa Rica.

The gap of 11 years since Air Jamaica last served the UK has been extended by a further six weeks because of licensing problems. The airline (0181-570 7999) intended to relaunch services from London to Montego Bay and Kingston at the end of May, but the start date has been put back to four weeks from today. The airline will initially offer three flights per week from Heathrow Terminal 3.

Reef and Rainforest Tours (01803 866965) runs a 13-day group tour of Indonesia, taking in Java and Sumatra. It visits Java Kambas and Ujung Kulon national parks, providing the chance to see tiger, tapir and Javan rhino. There is also a visit to Krakatoa volcano.

site of the 1883 eruption. The price of £1,172 includes transport and accommodation within Indonesia, but air fares from Britain are extra.

You can be part of the audience at a number of venues around the United States. At the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago tourists can sit in on an archive programme called "Those Were the Days" on Saturdays or "Inside Politics" on Sundays. Call 001 312 629 6019 for bookings. The CNN Center in Atlanta has an afternoon audience show, which you can attend even if you do not take the studio tour. Pick up tickets at the CNN Center in the morning.

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Special rates are available to Le Lac des Réves guests at the Montpellier Massane Golf Club, designed by Ronald Fream, with a training centre led by David Leadbetter.

The beaches of Camon, Palavas and the futuristic resort of La Grande Motte are within ten miles. Further afield are Nîmes and the Carmargue.

This offer is available on holidays taken throughout the 1996 season, subject to bookings being made by 15 May 1996.

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This travel offer has been arranged in conjunction with Haven Europe. To book, or for a brochure, please telephone Haven Europe on 01705 466111, quoting F101 or post the coupon to: Haven Europe, Northway Marina, Northway Road, Hayling Island, Havant PO11 1NH.

The Independent, Le Lac des Réves Holiday, Haven Europe, Northway Marina, Northway Road, Hayling Island, Havant, PO11 1NH.

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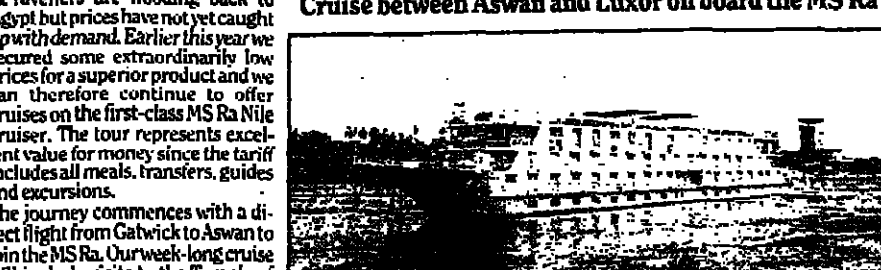
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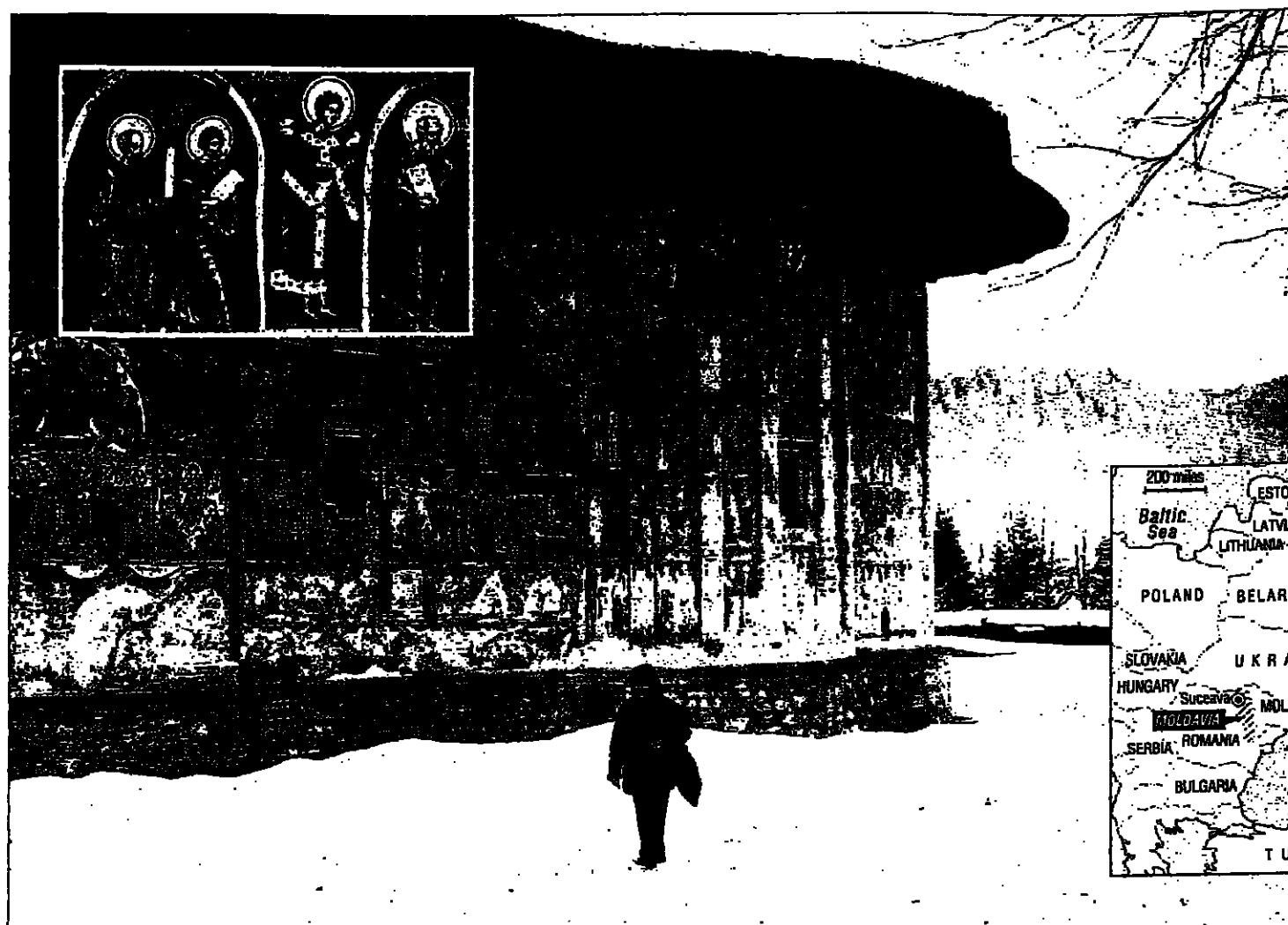
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Demons and nuns at the end of the world

In Romania this weekend Orthodox Christians are celebrating Easter in glorious churches where the snow is still melting. By Richard McClure



Main picture: the monastery of Humor. The tranquil setting belies the frenzy of slaughter on its walls. Detail: fresco from Sucevita. Photographs: Richard McClure



Galina's words rang in my ears as the train tumbled with the ferocious blizzard sweeping down from the Russian plains. "Here, you'll freeze without this," she had said that morning, handing me a sleeping bag. "It's the end of the world up there."

She spoke from experience. Having worked for 15 years at the state central heating company, she had little faith in Romania's ramshackle pipes and boilers. They could not be trusted to work in Bucharest, she said, let alone Moldavia – the portion of Romania facing the newly independent republic of Moldova across the former Soviet border.

Her concern was echoed by the passengers sharing my compartment on the six-hour journey north to Suceava, the old princely capital of Moldavia. I was on my way to visit the quartet of painted monasteries that lie among the foothills of the eastern Carpathians.

In late spring and summer, all four monasteries – Voronet, Sucevita, Humor and Moldovita – can be easily reached by hiking along well-marked tracks which cross the spruce-covered landscape of

bears and lynx. At this time of the year, travel is a far more treacherous proposition. The monasteries are remote, the trails impassable, the campsites closed and the bus timetable designed for maximum inconvenience.

Whatever the temporary hardships, the Orthodox monasteries are too magnificent to miss. Built in the 15th and 16th centuries when Moldavia was Christendom's last refuge from the rampaging Ottoman empire, each is adorned with biblical scenes of epic proportions. Uniquely, the sacred tableaux cover not only the inside walls, but every inch of the exteriors, their radiant colours shielded from the corrosive winds by vast wooden eaves.

By the time the train limped into Suceava, my slight trepidation had been eased by Diana, a student returning home for half-term. Aghast at my poorly laid plans, she invited me to stay at her family house in Radauti. Her father, Luca, a local doctor, owned a summer cabin in Sucevita and would be happy to accompany me – weather permitting.

Ten miles from the Ukrainian border and within striking distance of the monasteries, Radauti is a worthwhile

base. The next morning, to whet my appetite, I explored the town's 14th-century church – the oldest in Moldavia. Although the frescoes in the dank interior had been obliterated by centuries of candle-smoke, it held other treasures, including, in one darkened corner, an ornate casket where the bones of a saint lay on golden brocade.

That afternoon we set off for Sucevita in Luca's silver Dacia, Romania's functional equivalent of the Lada or Trabant. The snowfall had reduced the road to a trough of sludge a few yards across and the only traffic was a procession of carts, loaded with logs and pulled by a brace of horses with scarlet tassels swinging from their bridles. From the window, I saw gypsies' houses painted in their lucky colours of red and green and villagers balancing precariously as they shovelled snow from their roofs.

Slowly, the whitewashed cornfields yielded to the slopes of hills which in summer months are dressed in wild mushrooms and mountain flowers. Luca dropped me off a short distance from the monastery; he had jobs to attend to at the cabin further along the valley.

Sucevita is the largest of the monas-

teries and, like the others, protected by UNESCO. Enclosed within a formidable outer wall of battlements and turrets, it is more castle than church. The stillness of my approach – broken only by the competing cries of wood pigeons and crows – ill-prepared me for the scenes of infernal torment as I entered the courtyard.

Ahead, stretching 20 feet along the north wall, a Ladder of Virtue ascended towards heaven. A host of angels assisted righteous souls to the celestial city, while monstrous demons writhed sinners from the rungs and cast them into the fiery pit. Beneath the fresco, nuns swathed in black passed to and fro like figures brought magically to life from the walls. One unlocked the monastery doors for me to step inside, but its cave-like chill took my breath away and I left quickly, shivering.

At his cabin, Luca had lit a fire. Dispensing whisky and fruit, he talked of his patients' ailments and Moldavia's timber industry which is polluting the rivers and diminishing the forest with indecent haste. Night had fallen by the time we made the journey home but the

rickety traffic had not abated and our way back was illuminated by the single lanterns tied to each cart. Twice, as the car edged past nervous mares, we slid off the road and got wedged firmly in the snow.

The other monasteries lack the sweeping grandeur of Sucevita but are no less breathtaking. Seen in a morning sun full of spring promise, Voronet's *Last Judgement* dazzles the eye with its mysterious blue pigment, the exact composition of which has yet to be determined. From here, it is only a few miles along the valley to Humor (a walk possible even in winter). The most modest of the monasteries, its tranquil setting belies the scenes of frenzied slaughter on the walls: Turkish heads roll under the axe as the infidel fall victim to Christian wrath.

A few days later, a wizened stallholder at Radauti's weekly market refused to sell me a dozen wilting flowers for my hosts. "Twelve is for dead people," he admonished. But his suggestion of 13 blooms gave rise to my own latent superstition and we settled on 11. In Moldavia you don't want to go upsetting the spirits.

How to get there

British Airways (0345 222111) flies daily except Sunday from Gatwick to Bucharest; the World Offer fare is £266 including tax. More cheaply, you can fly from London to Bucharest on the Romanian national carrier Tarom for £211 return through Ace Travel (01494 463324).

As an alternative to the six-hour train journey from Bucharest to Suceava, there are flights daily except Sunday from Bucharest.

A fly-drive holiday with Intra (0171-323 3305) costs £347 per person for one week, inclusive of a flight on Tarom and hire of a Ford Fiesta, based on two people sharing.

Who to ask

The Romanian Tourist Board, 83a Marylebone High Street, London W1M 3DE (0171-224 3692) has a brochure on cultural centres in Moldavia, and can also supply a useful road map of the country.

What to read

The Rough Guide to Romania by Dan Richardson and Tim Burford (£9.99).

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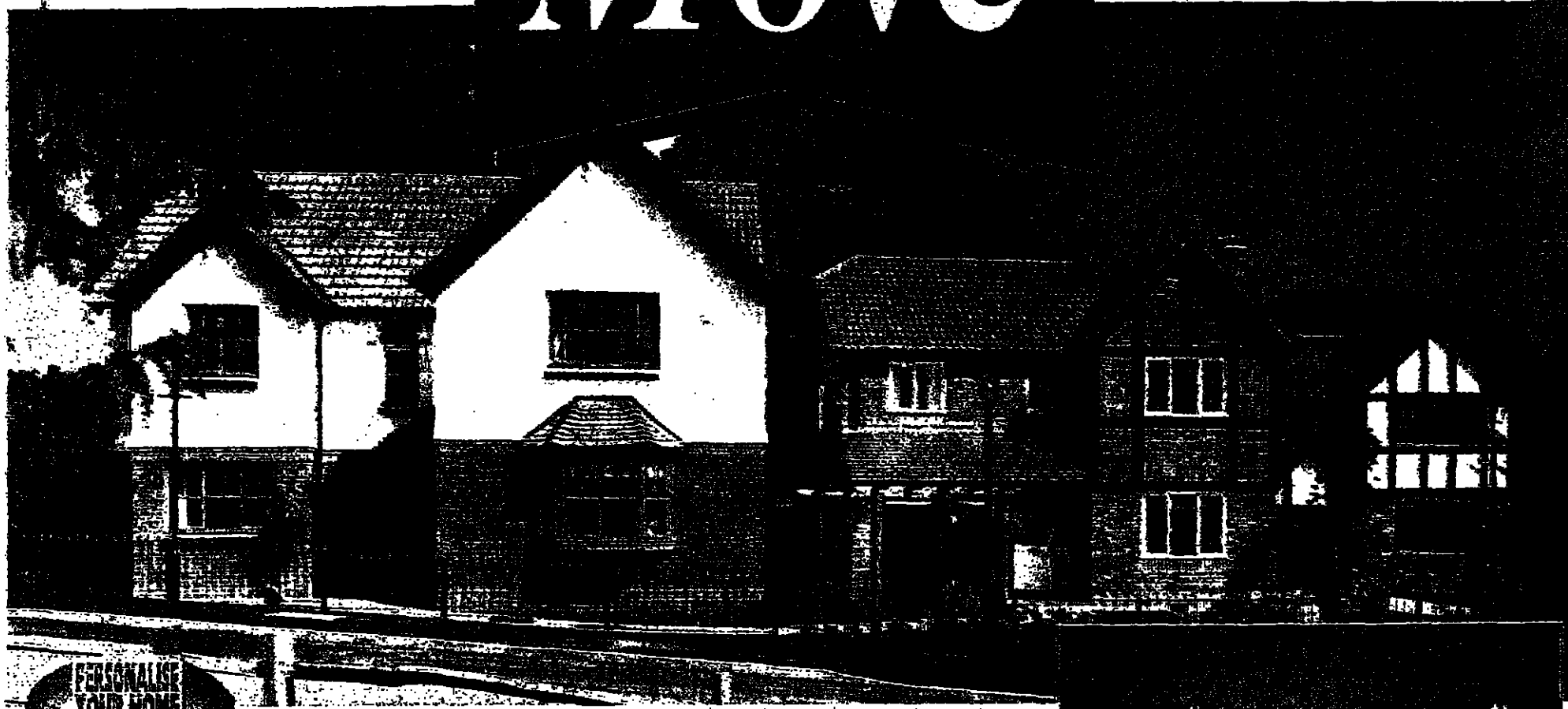
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A full recovery from major surgery

The Royal Naval Hospital in Plymouth is an example of how to redevelop an historic building without ruining it. By Mary Wilson

It is unusual for a property to have had one careful owner for more than 200 years, but the old Royal Naval Hospital buildings, at Stonehouse, two minutes west of the centre of Plymouth, can certainly boast that.

And that owner, the Ministry of Defence, has left them in superb condition.

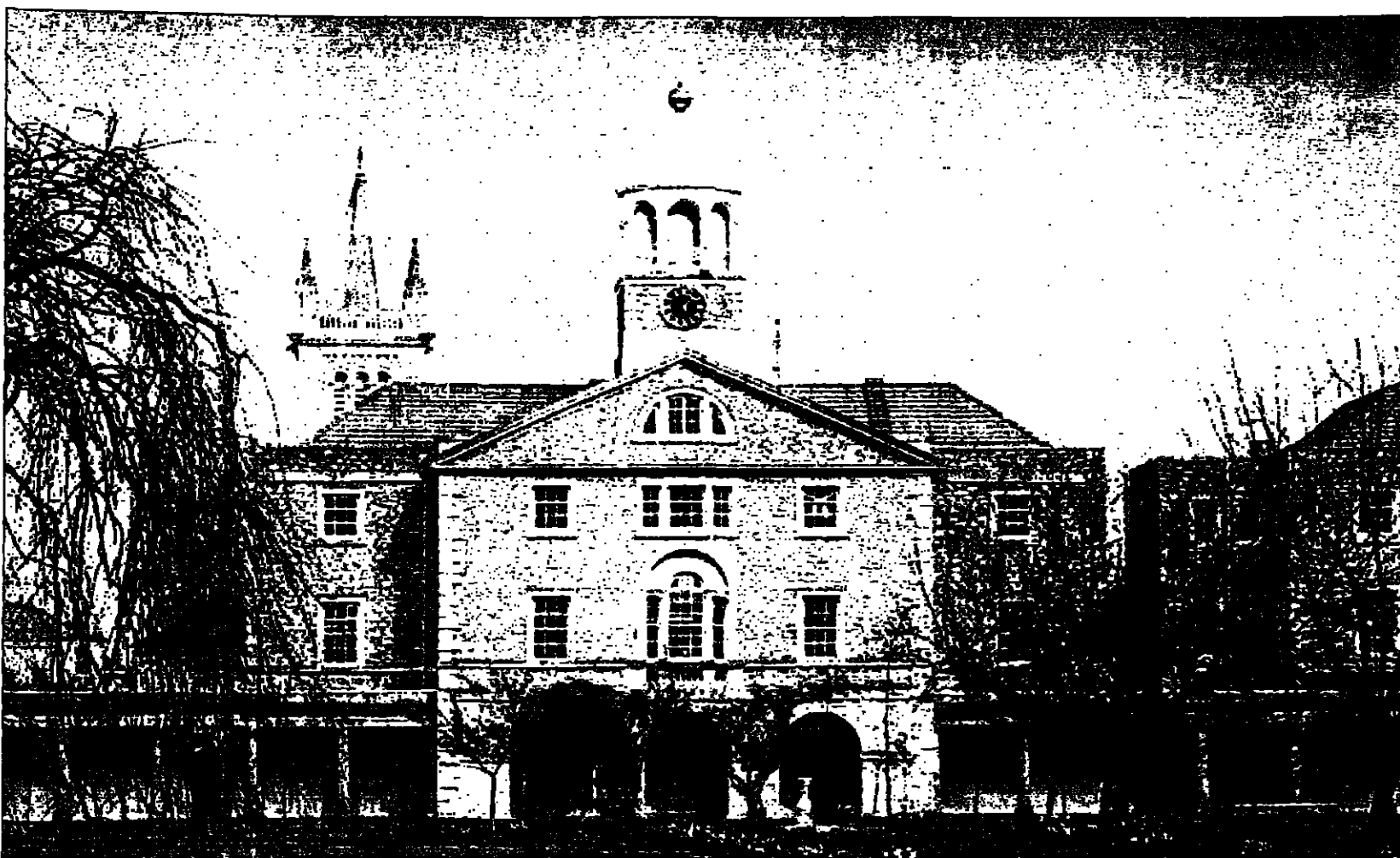
The hospital was constructed in the 1750s, the first to be built with separate ward blocks to avoid contagion. It is set in 24½ acres, surrounded by an 18ft high stone wall. In the late 18th century, further residential accommodation was built, substantial five-storey limestone buildings and cottages, and these are now for sale as family homes. The central part of the site, meanwhile, will be commercial – the Chamber of Commerce and Business Link are future tenants. The eastern end has been taken by St Dunstone Abbey Girls School. Work there is frantically being completed before the new term starts next week.

The site has an unusually low ratio of bricks and mortar to open space, and the new owner values this highly. Charles Howeson, a naval officer for 27 years, left the service six years ago. He was looking for property in the South-west of England for Peacestone, a Scottish Investment Group, which prides itself on its environmental and conservation concern.

"I was part of a local initiative to attract investment to this part of the world," he explains. "When the hospital was vacated, I recommended that this would be an opportunity for the company to be involved in some responsible regeneration."

"Peacestone was interested in long-term investment, so devolved the residential side to my company, Crown Hill Estates. We exchanged contracts last February and I then had five months in which to make my business plan stack up before we completed."

Howeson and his wife, Emma, initially raised the money from the local Barclays Bank, with the intention of selling four houses and one commercial property by August. This they did, and all at the asking prices. "I knew Solar Wetsuits was looking for new premises, so I approached them; a senior local government officer from Plymouth City Council obviously knew about it and had been banging on my door as soon as he heard of my involvement; and the managing director of the merchant bank contacted me, too. Another house went to an ex-marine and his sister."



The Royal Naval Hospital

Photograph: Apex

Although Howeson says he paid over the market price for the residential element of the site, he has already made a sizeable profit. But he is also very concerned about the environment. "My role is to protect the place," he says.

"We have put in new services and Eurobell has installed the newest fibre-optics for telephones and so on. The company is moving into the gate house next month."

"We are also putting in a new road and have restored the jetty which now juts over a grass 'sea'. One of our first jobs was to deinstitutionalise the place. There was a forest of signs to remove, including all the ones which said 'Don't Walk On The Grass'."

The site is now called Millfields, the

original name of the place in the Domesday Book. It feels remarkably peaceful, a quality dependent in no small part on the excellent security which is proving a definite selling point. There is one entrance only, with guards on duty 24 hours a day. Burglar alarms and fire alarms are also directly connected to them.

Each property is sold on a 999-year lease with protective covenants such as no boats and caravans. "The first properties were completed at the same time, so the buyers all had a hand in moulding their lease," says Howeson.

A collection of outbuildings has been bought by John Chaddler, a property developer from Sussex, who was born in Plymouth. He is converting these into 10

one-, two- and three-bedroom flats. Three of them have already sold. "Where else in Plymouth, could you buy a flat with this sort of security?" he says.

"If these were in Sussex or London, they would be double the price."

Tony Allen, an ex-marine, has jointly bought the Commander's House with his sister. "I knew the way the MOD looked after its premises and so I was not surprised when we discovered 10 original fireplaces hidden away – and an old range in the basement, also boarded up," he says. "In the laundry room, we found the original flagstones and huge old brick fireplace."

Howeson is adamant that only the right people will live here. "It is like a ship," he says, "the first people who

move in are the ones who create the ambience of the place. I refused someone who offered a lot more than the asking price because I did not think he would be happy in the long term." Which is a polite way of saying that he was just not suitable. Howeson is therefore delighted that an ex-naval nurse who worked here and whose father was a doctor at the hospital, has just bought one of the houses.

Prices of homes at Millfields range from £38,000 for a one-bedroom flat to £75,000 for a two-bedroom cottage and £265,000 for the Admiral's House. For more details call May & Trout, 01752 225601 or Constables, 01752 668242.

Househunter

Chipping Campden, Gloucs



The most unlikely house in Mayfair, central London, is for sale. This Gothic-style castle – which has been rented in the past by many a showbiz star, including Cher – was built in 1930 by Frederick Etchells. It is approached down a long passage between two other buildings, also devised by Etchells, and totally hidden from view. Once inside the arched front door, you are transported back in time. The rooms are oak-panelled with intricate friezes and ceiling mouldings. There are Tudor-style fireplaces, stained-glass windows and charming carved heads on the oak banisters. The curtains and four-poster beds are also for sale. The only concession to the 20th century are the bathrooms. The four-bedroom house, which is Grade II-listed and has a terrace on its castellated roof, is being sold by Wetherell (0171 493 6935) for £795,000 for a 22-year lease.

For what it's worth

The latest figures from the National House Building Council (NHBC) show that in the first quarter of 1996 housing starts are down 9 per cent from 42,277 to 38,455 and completions are down 5 per cent (40,161 down from 42,361). But the council is not despondent. "We are still cautiously optimistic that the market will improve," says a spokesman. "The figures are slightly disappointing, but the rate of decline is slowing. In the last quarter of 1995, housing starts were down 20 per cent and completions down 8 per cent." The latest reduction in mortgage interest rates and slight house price rises indicates that the market is poised to take off again, albeit in a very gentle fashion.

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OXON PROF WOMAN 40s likes theatre, film, music, good food and conversation appreciates wit & kindness seeks humorous intelligent M for quality company. Box No 1: 1191.
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be due to exchange rate fluctuations.

What a fine old ship the UK
economy is. She may be old
but she's made from solid
British oak. Unfortunately
she does appear to be some-
what leaky and in spite of a drastic
overhaul since 1979 her equipment
doesn't seem to be quite as modern
as her neighbours.

Discipline among the crew has
been dramatically improved even if
the differences between officers and
crew are more sharply defined. There
now, however, appears to be some
difficulty ahead, as the crew in this
democratically run ship is shortly to
re-elect its captain and officers.

Until this is over she is likely to be
less certain in her course and there
may even be an amount of sail flap-
ping. However, once the good
governance of the vessel has been
decided she will again be able to
make her way and be possibly set on
a new course.

The question, however, is whether
she is in the right shape to compete
with some of the more elegant look-
ing continental galleons around her,
and, come to that, if she wishes to sail
with this squadron of other ships or
make her own way?

As investors in this enterprise we
need to be assured that the master is
clear about what he is intending to
achieve, and that our monies are safe
with him and his crew.

Already we can see our markets
being affected by the impending elec-
tion. Whether it is based on logic or
emotion, share prices will inevitably
be influenced. Some, such as the
water, electricity and power stocks
will be really quite sensitive, but
other privatisations have little need
to be concerned.

I include companies like BAA and



JUSTIN URQUHART-STEWART
INVESTMENTS

British Airways here. These compa-
nies have been in the private domain
for such a period now and have
created their own profile and culture.
That most people can hardly
remember them as being publicly
owned at all.

The traditional view of an election,
where a change of party is possible,
is that the market worries over a
Labour administration until it has
won, and then realises that this means
greater public expenditure, after
which it forgets its concerns and
recovers. This time the situation is
different. Both "captains-elect" will
have the same problem—money—or
rather the shortage of it. The ability
of either administration to increase
public expenditure is severely
restricted because the public sector
borrowing requirement is still stand-
ing at just over 4 per cent of gross
domestic product, and, if we are to
conform to the Treaty of Maastricht
then this has to reduce to 3 per cent.

So, whoever wins they may set a
new course, but it's likely to be very
similar to the old one.

For the markets though, the main
concern is uncertainty. We can

already see this reflected in the UK
market, when in the first quarter the
FTSE 100 under-performed after
last year's exhaustive rise. And we
only have to look at the US market
to see that their rise has continued—
so far.

They too have an election. Clinton
maybe ahead in the polls but the only
dead certainty is that certainty is
dead. I feel it is very likely that with
the increasing froth of their cam-
paigning, their markets will also react
to the uncertainty, and that at some
stage in the summer a seemingly
insignificant economic action or indi-
cator will trigger a retrenchment of
the Dow.

The uncertainty of the past week
has, I believe, already undermined
the market confidence and there will
be further tremors to come.
Inevitably when this occurs there
will be a backwash which our market
will have to ride, but we shouldn't be
so badly effected as we have not risen
so high.

So our summer is unlikely to see
our ship lying placidly in a becalmed
ocean. The political—both domesti-
cally, in Europe and further afield—
will keep us all awake. I can't see the
FTSE 100 Index moving firmly with
its own will in any direction, and it is
far more likely to be tossed around
by the vicissitudes of other external
events.

In the short term we have the Rail-
track privatisation to deal with and
every chance of another one later in
the summer in the form of British
Energy.

The market is also full of rumours
of corporate sharks behaving in a
predatory manner looking for take-
overs. When the monopolies and
mergers commission report on the

proposed takeovers by PowerGen
and National Power of any remain-
ing Regional Electricity companies
appears, this is likely to have a knock-
on effect and spark a new round of
speculation.

Speculation over BT's negotia-
tions (with Cable & Wireless) and the
future of British Gas should help
their shareholders see more value in
their languishing share prices. Other
ers like water stocks may also come
back into the frame.

But why is all this speculation
occurring now? The answer seems to
lie in a feeling that if you don't do it
now, it will be more difficult later. I
am not completely convinced. I think
it more likely that companies which
have been building up reserves are
looking for significant growth oppor-
tunities and acquisitions are an effective,
if not necessarily easy way of
going about it.

Interest rates are low and are
likely to remain so for the time being
—although the next move could be up
if the retail recovery shows any sign
of quickening. So what should we do
with our money in this naval enter-
prise? In my view, if you are already
invested then obey sound investment
rules—if you are showing a good
profit, then bank it; if you are showing
a loss then cut it, unless you
believe there is a special factor.

In the meantime, our market will
probably sway to and fro until the
question of captaincy and officers has
been decided. So if you are in an
investment skill be prepared for the
summer back wash from the US and
do watch out for the sharks.

Justin Urquhart Stewart is business
planning director, Barclays stock-
brokers limited

The portfolio to beat all Peps

First prize for prod-
uct innovation this
year so far must
go to Scottish
Amicable's Per-
sonal Equity Port-
folio, which will be on
offer from May 1 to June
10. It combines the tax-
free attractions of a per-
sonal equity plan bigger
than all the existing Peps
available to date with the
ability of a split-level
investment trust to chan-
nel all the income to the
tax-free part of the trust
and any capital gains to
another.

In effect an investor
can put up to £50,000 into
the plan, of which £6,000
will go into ordinary
shares in a new split-level
investment trust, Amica-
ble Strategy Trust, which
will be placed in a PEP
and £44,000 into warrants
which will be converted
into capital shares held
outside the PEP.

The management will
deduct an initial charge of
4.9 per cent, of which 3
per cent will go in com-
missions to the indepen-
dent financial advisers
through which the plan
will be marketed.

The balance will be
invested in equities cho-
sen from the FT-SE top
350 shares, which cur-
rently yield an average of
about 3.8 per cent net, a
fraction less than the top
100 shares.

The whole of the
income will be credited to
the ordinary shares, how-
ever, and can be paid out
half-yearly or rolled up
tax-free within the PEP
element of the fund to
generate a return in excess
of 6 per cent to higher-
rate taxpayers. There will
be an annual manage-
ment charge of 1 per cent.

The capital shares will
earn no income and will
fall in value if the 350-
share index falls during
the planned seven-year
life of the trust.

Unlike Scot Am's guar-
anteed PEP there will be
no guarantee. But as Scot
Am's general manager of
product development,
Gavin Stewart, who cre-
ated the fund, points out,
there has not been a time
since 1975 when the Lon-
don stock market has
fallen over a seven-year
period.

In the meantime the
fund will be managed to
try and outperform the
350 share index. At the
end of seven years the
trust will be wound up
unless 75 per cent of the
shares are voted to con-
tinue. The capital shares
will have first entitlement
to the capital, and will
receive £50,000 or £44,000
plus the rate of inflation,
whichever is the higher.

If the rate of inflation
averages 1.85 per cent or

less the £50,000 will be
payable and there will be
some capital gains tax
liability.

But in the likely event
that inflation is higher the
second option will be trig-
gered and the gain will,
under current regulations,
be tax-free.

Once the capital shares
have been paid any
remaining capital will be
paid out to the ordinary
shares and as they are
inside the PEP that gain,
like the income, will be
tax-free.

Scot Am, sponsor of
the Barbarians rugby club,
has set a ceiling of £1bn
on the size of the trust but
will be satisfied if it
attracts at least a quarter
of that. The maximum
investment is £50,000 per
person and £100,000 for a
married couple, but the
minimum investment has
been scaled down at the
request of IFAs to
£10,000, of which £1,200
represents ordinary shares
and £8,800 the capital
shares.

To qualify for the trust
investors must not yet
have used any part of their
1996/7 PEP allowance.
The trust is being mar-
keted through IFAs and
applications must be
lodged with the Royal
Bank of Scotland by June
10.

The new product has
taken Scot Am six months
to devise. The proposal
has been run past the
Inland Revenue, which
has raised no objection to
the concept, although like
the guaranteed corporate
bond PEP invested in its
own shares marketed last
year by Legal & General
the Scot Am product does
appear to strain the Treas-
ury's definition of what is
an eligible Pepable
investment.

Independent financial
advisers are divided over
whether there will be a
ready market for the
product. The income yield
will still be significantly
lower than what is avail-
able on most corporate
bond Peps and high-
income Peps which
medium-sized investors
can buy each year, while
large investors who will be
constrained by the annual
limit of £9,000 on new
Peps of all kinds already
have a wide range of alter-
native investments open
to them at home and
abroad.

If, however, the Scot
Am product succeeds in
tapping a rich vein of
investor interest competi-
tors seem likely to follow
suit and to try and run the
gauntlet of approval from
the Inland Revenue to get
similar products on the
market before the end of
the financial year which
has just begun.

Amicable's Personal
Equity Portfolio wins
the best innovation of
the year award in
Clifford German's books



Front-line: Scottish Amicable stands out from the rack

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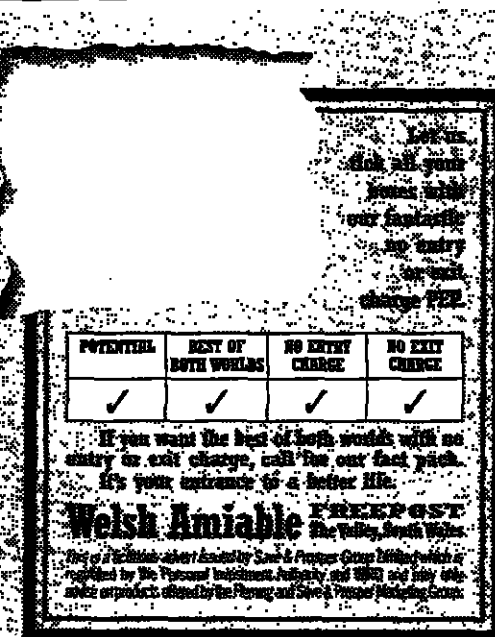
money offshore investments

An umbrella in the sun

Offshore benefits may have been restricted, but new products fill the gap. By Stephen Spurdon



The Channel Islands: Tax and investment advantages



The idea of going offshore for investment used to have a "naughty but nice" feel about it, with the promise of gains growing tax-free out of sight of the Inland Revenue. However, such an impression is a bit old-fashioned and certainly misleading.

UK residents for tax purposes nowadays have to declare the income and capital gains to the Inland Revenue. There is virtually no way out of this because loopholes in UK legislation on offshore investments have been closed remorselessly in the past two decades in an effort to combat tax evasion. But there are still some advantages to be had from some offshore investments.

The 1984 budget introduced a change to the tax regime governing investment in offshore funds that distribute at least 85 per cent of their income to investors as either dividends, shares or units. The rest of the gains on the fund are treated as capital for tax purposes. These can be offset against the investor's annual capital gains tax allowances, and have indexation relief applied to them.

Investors in funds that do not have this distributor status are called roll-up or accumulation funds. They find that all gains are taxed as income at the highest rate to which the investor is liable when the fund is encashed.

This only temporarily dented the market for offshore investment, however, for many UK investors saw benefits in offshore fund structures called umbrella funds.

An umbrella fund is an offshore fund which is managed in a similar way to a UK authorised unit trust but offers a much wider spread of assets between which the investor can switch. The investment options will cover equity, fixed-interest and

currency funds, sometimes with further specifications as to risk, geographical sector and income or growth requirements.

Since the May 1989 budget profits made when holdings are switched between sub-funds in an umbrella count as disposals, and are thus liable to capital gains tax.

But, despite these blows to their appeal to UK-based investors, both distributor and roll-up funds still present tax avoidance and investment advantages. With both types of fund, the investor can time the encashment of his fund to coincide with retirement and perhaps a lower income tax rate, or even with retirement abroad, for example.

Some still believe that there are advantages for UK innovators in looking at offshore funds. One is Nigel Parker, director of Jersey-based Garmore Fund Managers International, which manages the Garmore Capital strategy umbrella fund. This has distributor status, and is currently worth £489m. There are 227 sub-funds in the umbrella, including 14 equity funds, five bond funds and eight money funds. Minimum investment is US\$2,500 or the equivalent, and initial charges are 5 per cent for equity funds, 3 per cent for bonds and nil for money funds; annual charges are 1.5 per cent (equity), 3 per cent (bond) and 1 per cent (money).

Mr Parker says: "The reason to look to offshore umbrellas is because of the flexibility rather than the tax advantages. Because of the changes to the tax regime for a UK resident it is not really a tax-driven investment at all. However, there are advantages compared with UK-based unit trusts."

"For instance, where you switch between UK funds, you have to take into account the charge incurred because of the bid-to-offer spread.

However, with Capital Strategy, sub-funds all are single-priced on a net asset value basis so there are no conversion fees and we do the foreign exchange for you.

"In the UK all funds are denominated in sterling, even a US or Japanese fund, but here such funds are denominated in dollars and yen. This means the manager does not incur the currency conversion charges when purchasing the underlying assets. I would also point to an ease of asset allocation provided by the ability to switch free between funds as an asset in an increasingly volatile world."

Perpetual, a fund management group with a fine performance record, offers offshore unit trust funds with distributor status from its Jersey base, but they are not part of an umbrella structure. Roger Cornick, Perpetual's marketing director, sums up the reasons for UK innovators looking at offshore funds as: "Ultimately, it depends on the personal circumstances of an investor, ie where they want to be when they redeem the funds because that is when the tax charge will come. It may also be the case that the UK investor may take a view on currency and decide to move all his assets to a fund denominated in a currency other than sterling. It may also be the case that an investor feels a change of government is in prospect and that taxation rates may rise, in which case they may look to an offshore roll-up fund to shield investment from the UK government."

Investors seeking details of both distributor and roll-up offshore funds can find information in such magazines as the *International Resident Abroad*, *What Investment* and *Money Management*, as well as companies such as MicroPal (Tel: 0181-741 4100).

Big new kids on the offshore block

By Simon Read

Walk down any street in Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey or the Isle of Man, and you'll be likely to encounter Abbey National or Woolwich, Barclays or NatWest.

In the last 10 years or so most of the leading British banks and building societies have set up offshore branches or subsidiaries. While the existing, long-established offshore institutions offered a range of specialist financial services such as portfolio management, the new kids on the block were offering something far simpler — the savings account.

Many banks and building societies simply moved offshore so that they could offer UK residents tax-free savings. That loophole was subsequently closed by the Revenue but only after building societies and banks had woken up to other, new opportunities afforded by offshore subsidiaries.

There's a range of deposit and notice accounts, plus bonds and cheque accounts. Offshore accounts are UK-friendly, too, offering cash cards accepted in UK machines. So while your money may be earning good interest in St Helier, you'll be able to get at it easily in St Helens.

Interest on offshore accounts is still paid completely free of tax, leaving it up to you to inform the Inland Revenue of your offshore income. The Revenue can't force these offshore subsidiaries to reveal details of interest paid out to investors, so the onus is entirely on investors to pass on details.

You are allowed to keep cash in offshore savings accounts for as long as you like, but as soon as you bring it back into the country you must pay tax on your interest. If you're a non-taxpayer, going offshore can make life very simple. Investors are informed of what interest they've earned and can pass that information on to the Revenue if they pay no tax.

"A lot of people like the idea of having money offshore and are happy with the Channel Islands, for instance, because they are not a million miles away," says Geoff Roberts, business development manager at Lloyds Bank's offshore banking operation. Like many of the subsidiary

operations Lloyds Bank does not actively market its offshore products in the UK. But any British customers can simply call the offshore office to set up an account. From there things are run in much the same way as traditional onshore postal accounts. Cashcards and chequebooks are often provided giving instant access to cash if required, and the post, telephone and fax can come into play according to how you prefer to contact your branch.

"We attract a different kind of customer in Guernsey to those our mainland branches have," says Derek Smith, a director of Yorkshir, Guernsey, a subsidiary of Yorkshire Building Society. "As a result our offshore accounts are slightly different. For instance, the minimum balance is £5,000. Because we're dealing with larger amounts, we can offer more competitive rates. The average balance of our customers is more than £50,000 and that balance is often a small part of a detailed portfolio. They want a building society account to provide some liquidity."

Anti-money laundering rules offshore are very strict. The Channel Islands in particular are very jealous of their reputation. This means you will need to prove exactly who you are before you will be able to open an account.

For cash invested overseas, the protection regime is slightly different to the UK. Here your money is protected by the banks' deposit protection scheme or the building societies' compensation scheme. Both pay out up to 90 per cent of the first £20,000 of your savings in the event of a collapse of the institution concerned. The Isle of Man has its own depositor protection scheme run by the local financial supervisors. It's not as generous as the mainland scheme, paying just 75 per cent of the first £20,000 of your savings.

But if you have funds in the Channel Islands they won't be covered by any protection scheme. But if the worst did happen, offshore branches and subsidiaries would be supported by their parent organisations — which, in most cases, will guarantee the full amount of your savings.

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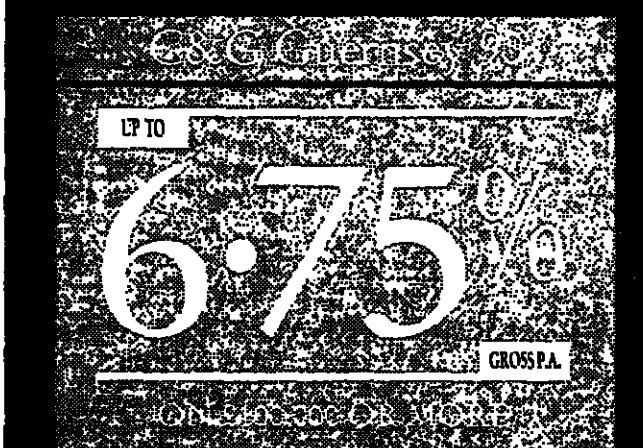
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money offshore investments



The Caymans: Among the offshore centres favoured by investors

Take the adventurous route to a tax haven

Tax savings, higher income, and little risk. An attractive cocktail, says Mike Goodman

Most savers seeking a "tax haven" need look no further than Peps or Tassas. But there are two groups of investor who will enjoy tax advantages from being more adventurous and investing offshore.

The first group are wealthy high-rate taxpayers who have used up all their Peps and Tassas allowances for the tax year, and have also exhausted their personal pension investment allowances. They may choose to "wrap up" their fund investment into single-premium offshore insurance bonds, and offshore trusts, to defer or minimise their future income and inheritance tax liabilities.

For them the name of the game is turning high-taxed income into capital gains. So their first choice among offshore funds should be those which "roll up" income into capital.

The second group are non-taxpayers who want to save the bother of reclaiming tax credits on their UK unit trust investments.

For them maximising income without undue risk to capital is the chief objective. So they are best suited to high-yielding funds which invest in cash deposits or bonds and enjoy "distributor" status.

Higher-rate taxpayers can also benefit from offshore investment through single-premium insurance bonds, as the Revenue allows up to 5 per cent of the original investment to be drawn out annually as tax-free income.

Tax is payable eventually, but can be deferred until the holder moves to a lower tax bracket, for example on retirement.

Another tax concession, the so-called "dead settlor" loophole, can defer or mitigate inheritance tax liability – for the moment. And the use of offshore trusts can also play its part in tax planning. An offshore trust can be based in a different jurisdiction to the assets. The Channel Islands, Bermuda and the Isle of Man are favourite "trust havens" as

their legal system is similar to that of the UK.

Sadly the so-called "5 per cent" concession and the "dead settlor" loophole are unlikely to survive the next Finance Bill, and will certainly disappear under a Labour government. That said, avoiding tax is not the be-all and end-all of investing offshore, as Julia Whittle, consultant at Chase de Vere Investment, explains.

"Don't just look at tax when deciding to buy offshore funds. Look at performance. Some offshore funds have not performed as well as the UK but it may be worth investing in offshore funds that do not have UK equivalents – multi-currency or emerging market funds, for example.

"Choose funds on their merits, not just because they are offshore. Often poor performance and higher charges cancel out the advantages of an offshore fund's tax-free status," she adds.

Investors already bewildered by the proliferation of UK unit trusts may be even more bewildered at the choice offshore. There are literally thousands sold out to a score of jurisdictions.

For safety's sake, however, it is wise to confine choice to funds managed by established UK names and based in six offshore centres – Jersey, Guernsey, the Isle of Man, Bermuda, Luxembourg and Dublin.

The first four enjoy so-called "designated territory" status with the UK authorities, who recognise that the local regulation is on a par with the UK's.

The last two fall within the European Union collective investment directives, which allow funds to be sold throughout the EU.

Statistics on offshore funds show they are big business in these territories. The "market leader" is Luxembourg which offers 2,000 different funds with assets totalling £70bn. And from a standing start nine years ago, Dublin's International Financial Centre now hosts 500 funds with assets of £30bn.

More than 300 operate in Jersey, with assets of £23bn, while Guernsey boasts about 200 funds with assets totalling £8bn. Bermuda, a tax-free haven for top US mutual fund groups, boasts more than 500 funds with more than £9bn of assets.

Only 100 funds are offered out of the Isle of Man and their assets are a modest £4bn. But funds offered by the island's life insurance companies through investment bonds more than double this total.

Investors in funds based in Luxembourg and Dublin benefit from their "open-ended company" structure, based on EU law. Unlike UK-style unit trusts, they are stock market-quoted companies.

These combine the best attributes of investment trusts with those of unit trusts. The first is single-pricing, the second is they can be set up as umbrella funds. With conventional unit trusts there is a bid/offer spread. With single pricing, there is one price and any sales or purchase costs are added on. This allows some brokers and fund managers to charge a flat fee which cuts the overall cost of large deals. With an "umbrella fund" structure, it is cheaper and easier to switch among funds in the same management stable.

For example, Mercury Asset Management's \$1.2bn Luxembourg-based Selected Trust offers 31 sub-funds. These range from low-risk bond funds to high-risk emerging market funds.

Some of these "company-style" trusts have already appeared in the Channel Islands, and they are set to appear in the UK later this year when the necessary legislation is in place.

New-style investment trusts may also be on their way from Dublin, where the authorities plan to allow so-called closed-ended investment companies. These will be similar to UK investment trusts, but may be allowed to redeem shares at net asset value for a limited period each year.

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Choose your own currency

By Stephen Spurdon

Having an investment portfolio with an adequate spread of risk usually involves a portion being invested in cash. This could be in a high-interest account in a UK bank or building society. Or you could go offshore and invest in a bank account or a money fund. Interest on a bank account is paid gross and no tax is payable on a money market fund until it is encashed.

In both instances the investor can make further gains (or losses) by investing in funds or accounts that are

not sterling-denominated.

Offshore money funds can be invested in one of a range of currencies or offered as a single managed fund where the investment decisions on what currencies to invest in are taken by the fund manager who normally invests in a variety of currencies. The funds provide a high rate of interest for investors by placing deposits on the wholesale money markets as well as the opportunity to switch quickly and cheaply between currencies through an umbrella fund structure.

Bear in mind that interest earned is subject to UK income tax when paid out to UK residents. If the fund has "distributor" status, sale of the fund proceeds will also give rise to a capital gains tax liability after allowance for indexation. If the fund is a "roll-up" fund, the interest earned is accumulated. It grows at compound rates and is added gross. Taxation may then be deferred until the investment is redeemed, whereupon the whole gain becomes subject to income tax.

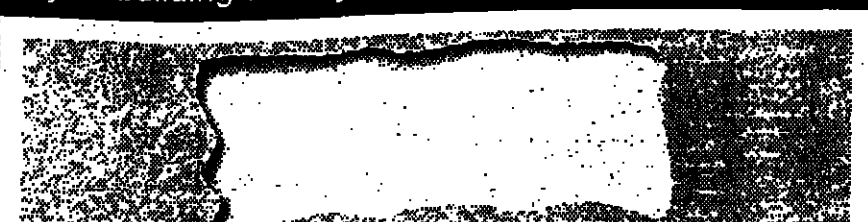
The top-performing currency fund last year was the Global Manager Japan Yen Bear fund. If the fund has "distributor" status, sale of the fund proceeds will also give rise to a capital gains tax liability after allowance for indexation. If the fund is a "roll-up" fund, the interest earned is accumulated. It grows at compound rates and is added gross. Taxation may then be deferred until the investment is redeemed, whereupon the whole gain becomes subject to income tax.

This compares with the top-performing sterling fund, DBIM Sterling Reserve, which produced a return of 7.33 per cent over the same period. These funds have all obtained an AAA rating from Standard & Poors. There is no initial charge for joining the single-currency funds, but the managed fund costs 3.5 per cent up front. All of these funds have an annual management charge of 0.85 per cent.

Jonathan Overland, the sales and marketing director at Newton International Investment Management Ltd, says: "There is no switching charge, and one price for buying or selling on any day."

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سأكون في المنزل

staying in

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>THE WEEK AHEAD</p> <p>MONDAY</p> <p>8.30pm C4. This new six-part series charting the history of the emergency services since 1945 begins by comparing two underground fires – the Great Smithfield Market in 1958 and the King's Cross disaster of 1987. (1776).</p> <p>Film: Red Rock West (John Dahl, 1992 US) 10pm C4. Penniless drifter Nicolas Cage is mistaken for a hit man and sent to kill Lara Flynn Boyle. Enter the real assassin... (31211).</p> <p>Omnibus: 10.10pm BBC1... (Not Scott, Spike Milligan (above) in his own words (5452318).</p> <p>Radio</p> <p>Robert Hanks</p> <p>Beyond the Millennium 8.40am R4. Six programmes in which specialists in different fields give their visions of the world in 2010 – starting with economist Noriko Hama, who foresees Europe breaking into a patchwork of city-states.</p>	<p>TUESDAY</p> <p>The Works 8pm BBC2. New series of unusual tales from the worlds of art and design begins with an engineer discovering a fatal flaw in the skyscraper he designed (above) (5351).</p> <p>Without Walls: The Elgin Marbles 9pm C4. William G. Stewart presents an unusual version of his daytime game show <i>Five to One</i>, to show that the Elgin Marbles should be returned to Greece (9535).</p> <p>Film: Apartment Zero 12.30am BBC2 (Martin Donovan 1988 UK). Just two words: Colin Firth (50833).</p> <p>It's a Cat's Life 9pm R2. The unhealthy British obsession with cats – one in four homes has one, £533m spent on cat food each year, the cat population expected to hit eight million in 2000 – comes under scrutiny from Willie Rushton.</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY</p> <p>Modern Times 9pm BBC2. Thirteen-year-old Ellen Morgan lives in exile in New Zealand. If she goes home to America she'll be forced to live with her father who, she says, sexually abused her. This is a follow-up to a 1990 film documenting her flight (8727).</p> <p>Madsen 9.30pm BBC1. Ian McShane drops <i>Lovejoy</i> for this new, darker role as a man who served eight years for a murder he didn't commit, gaining a law degree while inside. Now he wants to become a solicitor (above) (233659).</p> <p>Key Witness 8.35pm R4. Sir Frank Roberts, 89 this year and one of the last Foreign Office mandarins from the era of empire, remembers meetings with Stalin, Tito and Khrushchev in the first of three conversations with Alan Watson.</p>	<p>THURSDAY</p> <p>Hollywood Pets 8.30pm ITV. From the makers of <i>Hollywood Men</i> and <i>Hollywood Women</i>, a new series looking at the barking, bawling, and howling of the stars' pets. We begin with a "dis fashion consultant" (above) (6750).</p> <p>Witness 9pm C4. Interviews of survivors from Waco, Texas, some of whom are waiting for David Koresh to return as messiah (7741).</p> <p>Film: The Glass Menagerie (Paul Newman 1987 US) 12.55am C4. With Joanne Woodward and John Malkovich (54920432).</p>	<p>FRIDAY</p> <p>Have I Got News for You 10pm BBC2. Paul Merton steps down as regular rooster, but he's replaced by a tub of fat but by a rotating guest celebrity, starting with Eddie Izzard (above) (61577).</p> <p>Film: Father to Be (Lasse Hallstrom 1979 Swe) 12.50am BBC2. Swedish director Hallstrom has had mixed fortunes since arriving in Hollywood on the back of his <i>My Life as a Dog</i>. This is an earlier piece, about a bachelor whose life is complicated by his girlfriend's pregnancy (645317).</p> <p>As London except 12.25pm West. Dogs with Dumb (3734511). Wales: God, Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll (435375). 12.15am Film: Crazy Moon (490912). 1.55am Film: The Trap Door (424317). 2.40am Film: (4034582). 3.40am Film: Blonder's Big Moment (2985399). 5.00-5.30am Film: Blonder's Big Moment (2985399).</p> <p>Radio</p> <p>One in the Jungle 10pm R1. Poor old Pele gets pushed sideways to Sunday nights, and in his place we get a showcase for DJ's like Def, Navigator and GQ Fearless, this week, L.T.J. Butein. Apparently they're well known among the younger set.</p>

Sunday television and radio

BBC 1	BBC 2	ITV/London	Channel 4	ITV/Regions
<p>BBC 1</p> <p>7.30 Jim Henson's Animal Show (7536820).</p> <p>7.55 Playdays (S) (4731820).</p> <p>8.15 Italianissimo (R) (4472220).</p> <p>8.30 Breakfast with Frost. James Goldsmith and Yehudi Menuhin have an early start (54462).</p> <p>9.30 Glimpses of God (R) (5231707).</p> <p>9.45 First Light. Includes an interview with the parents of Ecstasy death teenager Leah Betts (874004).</p> <p>10.15 See Hear (S) (866085).</p> <p>10.45 The Multimedia Business (R) (S) (4598714).</p> <p>11.00 Hidden Empire (R) (S) (8714).</p> <p>11.30 My Brilliant Career. Derek Hatton (R) (S) (9443).</p> <p>12.00 Countryfile (S) (96004).</p> <p>12.30 On the Record (82630).</p> <p>1.30 EastEnders Omnibus (R) (S) (7414530).</p> <p>2.50 Calamity Jane (David Butler 1953 US). Big, bouncy musical western, with Doris Day at her most likeable as the tomcat romancing Howard Keel's Wild Bill Hickok (69448998).</p> <p>4.30 Biteback. Viewers' complaints (8731917).</p> <p>5.10 Masterchef 1996. Chef Germain Schwab and Ulfina Jonsson are the guest tasters (5699288).</p> <p>5.45 News: Weather (222998).</p> <p>6.05 Regional News (663882).</p> <p>6.10 Songs of Praise from the Holy Trinity Church, Leicester (S) (29882).</p> <p>6.45 Antiques Roadshow. From Bromborough in Hertfordshire (S) (969530).</p> <p>7.30 Hamish Macbeth Alex's book programme on Lachie Jir's pirate radio station leads to a rash literary interest in Lochdubh (S) (66714).</p> <p>8.20 Birds of a Feather. The one where Tracy, Sharon and Dorien become sure that Chigwell's new resident is the Princess of Wales (R) (842917).</p> <p>8.50 News: Weather (882795).</p> <p>9.05 The Addams Family (Barry Sonnenfeld 1991 US). Enjoyable filmatisation of the TV series goes back to the original New Yorker cartoons of Charles Addams for its look and ghoulish sense of humour. Some excellent casting too, with Anjelica Huston as Morticia, Paul Giamatti as Gomez, Christopher Lloyd as Uncle Fester and the striking Christina Ricci as Wednesday (S) (38653820).</p> <p>10.40 Heart of the Matter. David Puttnam, director of <i>The Killing Fields</i>, returns to Cambodia to explore the new killing fields, created by thousands of unexploded landmines (148917).</p> <p>11.20 In My Daughter's Name. Lued Taylor 1992 US). After a teenage girl's rapist and murderer is acquitted, the girl's mother takes matters into her own hands. Stars Donna Mills (S) (719917).</p> <p>12.50 Weather (269825). To 12.55am.</p> <p>REGIONS: Ni: 2.50pm Now You're Talking. 3.20 Irish Cup Soccer Special. 4.10 The Pink Panther Show.</p>	<p>BBC 2</p> <p>6.15 Open University: Pure Maths (7673269). 6.40 Maths Methods (8675207). 7.05 Antony and Cleopatra Workshop (6416981). 7.30 Biology: A Tale of Two Cells (7534462). 7.55 Public Space, Public Work (4720714). 8.20 Shooting Video History (4588743).</p> <p>9.10 Children's BBC: The Family News. 9.15 The All New Popeye Show. 9.40 Highlander. 10.05 The Littlest Pet Shop. 10.30 Grange Hill. 10.55 The Ant and Dec Show. 11.20 Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show.</p> <p>11.45 Star Trek (R) (9314269).</p> <p>12.35 The O Zone. PJ & Duncan tour Japan (3748424).</p> <p>1.05 Singled Out (S) (8690269).</p> <p>1.25 Police Squad (R) (8690308).</p> <p>1.50 The History Man. The English Civil War Society help illuminate the events of 1648 (51309801).</p> <p>2.00 Moonlight (Fritz Lang 1955 US). Stewart Granger, George Sanders and Joan Greenwood become involved with smugglers in mid-18th-century Dorset (9496066).</p> <p>3.25 The Prisoner of Zenda (Richard Thorpe 1952 UK). Stewart Granger again, this time starring opposite James Mason in this, the third screen version of Anthony Hope's swashbuckler (31957240).</p> <p>5.05 Rugby Special. Highlights from Bristol v Leicester (S) (6426207).</p> <p>6.05 Hunt of the Fishing Owls. The African Owl (R) (S) (781627).</p> <p>6.35 Rebellion. This 25th anniversary of the Battle of Culloden drama-documentary tells the story of the Jacobites in the first half of the 18th century, when they sought to restore the Catholic Stuart kings to the British throne. What – and miss out on those who have Hanoverians? (710191).</p> <p>7.25 Culloden Peter Watkins' film recreating the battle of Culloden. See Preview, p28 (2792004).</p> <p>8.35 Fantasy Football League. Melvyn Bragg and Alan Davies are on the lead's sofa (S) (751117).</p> <p>9.05 Golf – US Masters 1996. Steve Rider introduces coverage of the closing holes of the final round from Augusta (Due to live golf coverage following programme subject to change) (S) (88994379).</p> <p>12.00 The Phenix City Story (Phil Karlson 1955 US). Reportedly gripping newsreel-style recreation of the battle against corruption in an Alabama town, with the documentary technique taken to absurd lengths. An actor playing one of the murder victims was apparently made to wear the dead man's clothes (Then Weather) (70202).</p> <p>2.00 The Learning Zone: FETV Short Cuts: Job Seeking and Interviews (28009). 4.00 Suenos: World Spanish (44221). 5.00 Business and World (67738). 5.30 Winning (85047). To 6.00am.</p>	<p>ITV/London</p> <p>6.00 GMTV 6.00 The Sunday Review. 6.30 News and Sport. 7.00 The Sunday Programme (87288).</p> <p>8.00 Disney Club (S) (8298649).</p> <p>10.15 Link (S) (5058131).</p> <p>10.30 Morning Worship. From Fort Regent, Jersey (S) (99882).</p> <p>11.30 Blessed Are They. The composer John Tavener considers the biblical text Blessed Are the Pure in Heart (S) (6553085).</p> <p>11.55 Chalke Talk (S) (8347530).</p> <p>12.30 CrossTalk (19443).</p> <p>1.00 News, Weather (42760578).</p> <p>1.10 Jonathan Dimbleby (S) (3444820).</p> <p>2.00 Yesterday's Heroes. Footballing legends George Best and Rodney Marsh (3527).</p> <p>2.30 The Sunday Match. Live coverage of Charlton Athletic v Derby County (54214627).</p> <p>5.20 The London Programme. Ex-Arsenal boss George Graham talks about his sacking over allegations of a £425,000 "bung" (1155356).</p> <p>5.50 Local News, Weather (708733).</p> <p>6.15 News, Weather (144172).</p> <p>6.30 Surprise! Surprise! (S) (39240).</p> <p>7.30 Doctor Finlay. Costume medical drama set in the late 1940s. Janet finds a day-old baby abandoned on the doorstep of Arden House (S) (50917).</p> <p>8.30 You've Been Framed! (R) (S) (9608).</p> <p>9.00 News, Weather (8903751).</p> <p>9.15 Lethal Weapon II (Richard Donner 1989 US). Fatsy may be Mel Gibson's love interest. Things can only get better – and they do. Just. The weakest of the trio of <i>Lethal Weapon</i> movies comes a plot about a South African drug syndicate somewhere in there among the smash-bang-wallops (362559).</p> <p>11.15 The South Bank Show. Sting profiled. See Preview, above (S) (916849).</p> <p>12.15 Theatreland. Sheridan Morley presents the London theatre magazine, which includes the RSC's <i>Taming of the Shrew</i> and an interview with Josie Lawrence (92931).</p> <p>12.45 Sledge Hammer (S) (12022).</p> <p>1.15 Nip/Tuck. Diner in the Wool An Inspector. Mystery from 1978, with George Baker again impersonating Nip/Tuck's police officer. It's 1942, and rather than doing his bit, Nip/Tuck is rather curiously tracking down a missing New Zealand sheep farmer's wife. That's his story, anyway (207806).</p> <p>3.00 Nightwalk (Jerold Freedman 1989 US). Murder witness Lesley-Anne Down becomes the target of professional hit man Robert Ulrich. Goodness – is that the time? (S) (900486).</p> <p>4.35 Shift (R) (8992318).</p> <p>5.30 News (2573). To 6.00am.</p>	<p>Channel 4</p> <p>6.15 Trans World Sport (R) (6322004).</p> <p>7.10 Take 5 (S) (5694733).</p> <p>7.40 The Magic School Bus (S) (7515337).</p> <p>8.10 Sonic the Hedgehog (7886714).</p> <p>8.35 The Trap Door (424317).</p> <p>8.40 Blast Off (S) (5626789).</p> <p>8.50 Bitter Rice from Mars (R) (8507849).</p> <p>9.15 Saved by the Bell (R) (868443).</p> <p>9.45 Dumb and Dumber (S) (8281022).</p> <p>10.00 Insektors (5033882).</p> <p>10.15 Sister Sister (S) (859795).</p> <p>10.45 Wise Up (S) (858066).</p> <p>11.15 NBA Raw. Focus on Salt Lake City, home to the Utah Jazz basketball team (488849).</p> <p>12.15 Mission Impossible (102559).</p> <p>1.15 All at Sea (Charles Frenk 1957 UK). The last of the Ealing comedies suffers in comparison with its illustrious predecessors. Alec Guinness plays the scion of a sea-faring family. He simply doesn't have sea legs, so takes over the running of a holiday pier instead (590085).</p> <p>2.45 Very Important Person (Ken Annakin 1961 UK). A delicious cast – James Robertson Justice, Leslie Phillips, Stanley Baxter, Eric Sykes, Richard Wattis – send up the prisoner-of-war camp movie genre (61036733).</p> <p>4.35 The Pink Panther Show (5320820).</p> <p>5.05 Blue Wilderness. Dolphins (8087287).</p> <p>5.35 Holyoaks (R) (S) (435917).</p> <p>6.05 The Five (S) (475355).</p> <p>7.00 Triumph of the Nerds. See Preview (S) (3375).</p> <p>8.00 Encounters. Outback Fighters. The story of itinerant troupes of tent-dwelling roving the small mining towns of the Australian Outback at the turn of the century – and of Michael Karantana, who now carries on the tradition laid down by his grandfather (S) (9795).</p> <p>9.00 Deep Sleep. Secret History repeat detailing the shocking experiments conducted on depressed and mentally ill people in British-run hospitals in Australia between 1963 and 1978 (R) (9558).</p> <p>10.00 The Cowboys (Mark Rydell 1972 US). "One of the most topical cattle drives since the invention of motion pictures," reckoned Pauline Kael of this late John Wayne movie in which the Duke hires 11 boys to help him drive his cows across country. Pretty to look at, but the message – violent revenge is good – comes straight out of a Michael Winner picture (39916288).</p> <p>12.25 Football Italia. Napoli v AC Milan (5429009).</p> <p>1.25 Jana-Aranya/The Middleman (Satyajit Ray 1975 India). A young graduate comes face to face with corruption when he starts work in a small business in a satire set in modern Calcutta (84387776). To 3.50am.</p>	<p>ITV/Regions</p> <p>WELSH</p> <p>As London except 2.00pm A World of Wonder (3527). 2.30 Kick Off Live (3706511). 5.35 Heolaw (435375). 12.15am Film: Crazy Moon (490912). 1.55am Film: The Trap Door (424317). 2.40am Film: (4034582). 3.40am Film: Blonder's Big Moment (2985399). 5.00-5.30am Film: Blonder's Big Moment (2985399).</p> <p>TYNE-TESS</p> <p>As London except 12.25pm West. Dogs with Dumb (3734511). Wales: God, Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll (435375). 12.15am Film: Crazy Moon (490912). 1.55am Film: The Trap Door (424317). 2.40am Film: (4034582). 3.40am Film: Blonder's Big Moment (2985399). 5.00-5.30am Film: Blonder's Big Moment (2985399).</p> <p>CENTRAL</p> <p>As London except 12.30pm Central Newsweek (3755714). 2.00 Good Advice (3527). 2.30 The Central Match – Live (54214627). 3.20 Starters (817843). 5.00-5.30am Film: Crazy Moon (490912). 5.35 Heolaw (435375). 12.15am Film: Crazy Moon (490912). 1.55am Film: The Trap Door (424317). 2.40am Film: (4034582). 3.40am Film: Blonder's Big Moment (2985399). 5.00-5.30am Film: Blonder's Big Moment (2985399).</p> <p>STV</p> <p>As London except 12.25pm West. 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Radio

Radio 1

6.15-9.00am: 10.00am Kevin Greening 10.00am Dave Pearce 2.00 Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation 4.00 UK Top 40 7.00 Ministry of Sound 8.00 Radio 1 Rock Show 10.00 Andy Kershaw 12.00 Mary Anne Hobbs 4.00-6.30am Clive Warren

Radio 2

6.15-9.00am: 10.00am Don Maclean 9.05 Steve Wright's Sunday Love Songs 11.00am Parkinson's Sunday Supplement 12.00 Desmond Carrington 3.00am Gary Green 4.00 Let's Dance 4.30 Sing Something Simple 5.00am Amy 7.00 Hugh Scully 8.30am Sunday Half Hour 9.00 Alan Keith 10.00 The Passion of Stephen 12.05 Steve Madden 3.00-6.00am Alex Lester

Radio 3

6.15-9.00am: 10.00am Sacred and Profane. With Paul Guinary. 8.55 Choice of Three. 9.00am Brian Kay's Sunday Morning. 12.15 Music Matters. 2.30am The Sunday Feature: Welsh National Opera at 50. 6.30am Ravel, Stravinsky: Valse des nobles de Saint-Denis (Gaspard de la nuit, Debussy) (Mok piano). 7.30am The Sunday Play: The Dark Tower by Louis Hémon. 9.05 Choir Works. 11.15am The Monty Python. Jo Shinner talks to the Monty Python, the queen of the traditional curbs. 11.45-1.00am Record Review.

Radio 4

6.15-9.00am: 10.00am News Briefing. 6.10am Something Understood. 6.55am News. 7.00am Sunday Papers. 7.15am On Your Farm. 7.40am Sunday. Trevor Barnes presents religious news from home and abroad. 8.50am The Week's Good Causes. Anna Ford appeals on behalf of Contact the Elderly.



Choice

Neeme Jarvi conducts the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra in the first of four concerts: The Sibyllian Symphonies (1.25pm R3). By contrast, in *Relatively Speaking* (9pm, R4), Jo Brand's mother, Joyce, describes what it's like having a daughter (left) who goes on about cakes and monthlies on TV.

8.55 Weather. 9.10 Sunday Papers. 9.15am Letter from America. 9.30 Morning Service. 10.15 The Archers. Omnibus edition. 11.15am Desert Island Discs. With Viscount Rothamsted. 12.55am News. 1.00 The World This Weekend. 1.55 Shipping Forecast. 2.00am Gardeners' Question Time. 2.30 The Classic Serial: *The Constant Nymph*. By Margaret Kennedy. (1/2). 3.30 Pick of the Week. 4.15 Analysis. 5.00 News: Venom. Jellyfish. Few creatures are as misunderstood as these beautiful and mysterious marine organisms. (3/4). 5.30 Poetry Please. 5.50 Shipping Forecast. 5.55 Weather. 6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.15am African Harvest. (3/4). 6.30am In Business. 7.00 Children's BBC Radio 4: *Credited and Co.* (1/3). 7.30 Reading Aloud: *Growing Up. The Liar's Club* by Mary Karr. (2/7). 8.00 (FM) The Natural History Programme. 8.00 (LW) Open University. 8.30 (FM) Working History (5/6). 9.00 (FM) Relatively Speaking. (1/6) See Choices, above. 9.30 (FM) Costing the Earth. Mark Whittaker considers what man has made of the Durham Dales. 9.59 Weather. 10.00 News. 10.15 All in the Mind. Professor Anthony Clare discusses personal codes of morality with Baroness Warnock and discovers why psychologists have been given guidelines on how to deal with requests from the media.

Classic FM

10.00-10.15am: 10.00am Sarah Lucas 9.00am Classic Remembrance 12.00am Delella Classic 1.00am Michael Mappin 3.00am Masterclass 4.00am Robert Booth 7.00am Classic Countdown Top 10 8.00am Classic FM Evening Concert 10.00am Howard's Week 12.00am Mal Cooper 4.00-6.00am Mark Griffiths.

Virgin Radio

10.00-10.15am: 10.00am Sarah Lucas 9.00am Classic Remembrance 12.00am Delella Classic 1.00am Michael Mappin 3.00am Masterclass 4.00am Robert Booth 7.00am Classic Countdown Top 10 8.00am Classic FM Evening Concert 10.00am Howard's Week 12.00am Mal Cooper 4.00-6.00am Mark Griffiths.

World Service

1.00 Newsdesk 1.30am Development 1.55am Britain Today 2.00am Newsdesk 2.30am Short Story 2.45am On the Move 3.00am Newsdesk 3.30am LFO's Fact or Fiction 4.00am World News 4.15am Sports Roundup 4.30am Jazz for the Asking 4.30am Europe Today 5.00am Newsdesk 5.30am Europe Today 5.30am 6.00am Off the Shelf. *Miss Smith's Feeling for Snow*.

Satellite

SKY ONE

7.00am Undun (1092627). 11.30am Groucho-tastic (86269). 12.00am The Hit (66988). 1.00am Star Trek (65646). 2.00am The World at War (36733). 3.00am Star Trek (62085). 4.00am Wrestling (74828). 5.00am Around the World (2337). 6.00am Power Ranks (1578). 6.00am The Simpsons (191). 7.00am Beverly Hills 90210 (86153). 8.00am Star Trek (58011). 9.00am Love and Raymond (35248). 11.00am Scinfeld (82849). 12.00am 60 Minutes (29592). 1.00am She-Wolf of the Manor (547882). 2.00am 6.00am HK Mix Long Play (9404216).

SKY MOVIES

6.00am King Solomon's Mines (1936). 8.00am The 400 Blows (1959). 10.00am Beethoven's 2nd (1993). 12.00am The Hideaways (1973). 1.00am A Million to One (1993). 2.00am A Million to One (1993). 3.00am The Man (1993). 4.00am The Man (1993). 5.00am The Man (1993). 6.00am The Man (1993). 7.00am The Man (1993). 8.00am The Man (1993). 9.00am The Man (1993). 10.00am The Man (1993). 11.00am The Man (1993). 12.00am The Man (1993).

SKY SPORTS

7.00am Super League (85511). 9.00am Bowling (65269). 11.00am Roller Hockey (84892). 12.00am Goals on Sunday (2442). 1.00am Scottish Football (78898). 3.30am Super Sunday (3065707). 7.00am American Football (72761). 9.00am Super League 10.00am Football (361862). 1.00-3.00am American Football (10950).

SKY SPORTS 2

7.00am Soccer Extra (5998207). 10.30am Superleague (4588301). 12.00am Rugby (276838). 2.00am Superleague (3404578). 3.30am Opposite Lock (8347085). 5.30am Squash (8335240). 7.00am Superleague (849462). 12.00am Powerboat World (2654196). 12.30-1.00am Windsurfing (7886405).

UVE TV

9.00am Mind and Body. 9.30am Weight to Go. 10.00am The Fashion Show. 10.30am The Fashion Show. 11.00am Showbiz. 12.00am Fate and Fortune. 12.30am The Why Files? 1.00am 2.00am Sport. 2.30am Chequered Flag. 3.00am Canary Wharf Omnibus. 4.30am The Fashion Show. 5.00am Weight to Go. 5.30am Mind and Body. 6.00am Video Box. 6.30am Spanish Archer. 7.00am 425. 8.00am Weight to Go. 8.30am Mind and Body. 9.00am Fate and Fortune. 9.30am The Why Files? 10.00am Weird Night. 10.30am The Fashion Show. 11.00am Topless Stars. 11.30am Spanish Archer. 11.50am Stand Up. 12.00am The Sex Show. 12.30am Weird Night. 1.00am Home Shopping. 1.30am Spanish Archer. 2.00-9.00am Night Hours.

SKY MOVIES GOLD

12.00am Against the Wind (1948). (61578). 2.00am Flying Leatherheads (1951). (81646). 4.00am The Philadelphia Story (1940). (8466). 6.00am Zelig (1983). (81882). 8.00am Young Frankenstein (1974). (73627). 10.00am Young Frankenstein (1974). (73627). 11.55am A Hard Day's Night (1964). (578424). 1.25am The Face (1988).

Pastimes

Chess William Hartston

Experienced prodigy watchers can tell a future grandmaster from a precocious, but fundamentally talentless chess brat. The future GM sits with head in hands and an expression of total absorption in the game – as though nothing less than a major earthquake would disturb their concentration. Nigel Short and Judith Polgar both had that mature and concentrated look by the age of 11. So does Ruth Sheldon, 14, who made a women's grandmaster norm at last week's Vera Menchik Memorial in Newcastle. The following game, while unspectacular, shows all the right qualities: patience (the quiet opening), positional judgement (the space-gaining 19.b4 and 23.d5), calmness (29.axb4, without fear of the black a-pawn), and ruthlessness (37.Ra2) rather than taking immediately on a8). A highly polished game.

Bridge Alan Hiron

Love all: dealer South

North ♠A 4 ♣K 6 ♠Q 4 ♠A J 10 7 6 3

West ♠7 6 2 ♣Q J 10 4 ♠A 8 5 2 ♠9 4

East ♠9 8 5 ♣A 9 8 3 ♠9 3 ♠K Q 8 2

South ♠K Q J 10 ♠7 2 ♠K Q J 10 7 6 ♠5

The recent death of Terence Reese caused much sadness in the bridge world. For a tribute to his skills, one could hardly do better than admire his defence to Four Spades on this deal. Just see if you would have got it right – at the table! The bidding had started with One Diamond from South and he rebid his suit after a club response. North, reasonably enough, next tried Two No-trumps but, after a spade bid from South, raised dubiously to Four Spades. The defence started with three rounds of hearts and de-

Perplexity

Losswords: Three more entries from our dysfunctional dictionary which automatically deletes from each definition, in the right order, the letters of the word defined. Then it closes the gaps and gives the length of word deleted. So "puzzle", defined as "poser or quizzical rebus", would appear as: oserrorquicarbus (6). But what are these?

setebatorow (5)
nayaertandbrnhtlly (11)
stngpatoctas (10)

Answers by 25 Apr to: Pastimes: the Independent, 1 Canada Sq, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. A Larousse Desk Reference Encyclopedia awaits the winner.

30 March answer: MADCOW+MADCOW = CJDBSSE = 190327+190327 = 380654. So COD = 320. Winner: LD Toulson.



The big picture

Robocop
Sat 10.05pm ITV

Peter Weller, with his redoubtable expressionless, though wonderfully sculpted lips and chin, was the perfect casting choice for the helmeted cyborg law enforcer in *Robocop*. Paul Verhoeven's 1987 sci-fi film basically steals the idea of Judge Dredd and swamps it in vicious media satire. Weller plays a cop murdered by an evil gang, then brought back to life as a machine to combat the forces of lawlessness that are rampant in the film's bleak vision of future capitalism. Verhoeven's primal, crude energy is perfect for the cartoonist story.

Television preview

RECOMMENDED VIEWING THIS WEEKEND
by Gerard Gilbert



The Gaby Roslin Show Sat 9pm C4
Infamous Addresses Sat 10.30pm C4
Triumph of the Nerds Sun 7pm C4
Culloden Sun 7.25pm BBC2
The South Bank Show Sun 11.15pm ITV

Gaby's looking uncharacteristically po-faced in the publicity shots for *The Gaby Roslin Show* (Sat C4), like a child pretending to be grown-up or a dweeb trying to look brainy. Not that Gaby is either childish or stupid. She is, though, famous for being blonde, formerly of *The Big Breakfast*, weeping openly, and for being so transparently nice that she makes all those other breakfast TV presenters seem merely cynical.

She's our queen of hearts, and like dear Diana, she's having problems repositioning herself. *The Real Holiday Show* was an autotune reading job - but now she's been given a chat show, in an exercise hyped as reviving the chat show genre. Not that the chat show ever went away - it just went post-modern, with Letterman and Conan O'Brien in the States, and Jonathan Ross and Dame Edna over here. Whether it needs to be dragged back into the Parkinson era is debatable, but the first guests don't auger well either way. Des O'Connor wouldn't get out of bed for the ubiquitous Eddie Izzard or Kate Winslet (of *Sex and Sensibility*). Ike Turner is the only potentially interesting guest. Can Gaby handle it? Tune in and see.

By far the most interesting programme this weekend is more than 30 years old. The enduring power of *Culloden* (Sun BBC2), Peter Watkins's 1964 pseudo documentary in which the 1746 Battle of Culloden is subjected to TV documentary techniques, underlines what a terrible loss to British television was Watkins, who gave it all up after the BBC banned his similar treatment of a nuclear attack on Kent, *The War Game*. *Culloden* is being shown to mark the 25th anniversary of the battle in which Charles Edward Stuart was routed by the Hanoverians and assorted Protestant Scots (the line-up wasn't unlike a Celtic/Rangers derby in some ways - except Celtic, unlike Bonnie Prince Charlie, don't have any French players). This innovative TV film is still strong meat today. It must have seemed even stronger to the generation before the Vietnam War.

Meanwhile, they've been pulling down the gym in Dunblane, and Gloucester Council are considering demolishing 25 Cromwell Street. Plenty of other homes that are the sites of notorious murders are now, however, re-inhabited. *Infamous Addresses*

(Sat C4) finds out what it's like to live in the building where John Haigh dissolved bodies in acid, where George Smith drowned his wives, or where Jo Orton was bludgeoned to death by Kenneth Halliwell. John Christie, resident of 10 Rillington Place, is still on some company mailing lists apparently, despite the fact that Rillington Place met a bulldozer a quarter of a century ago.

One wouldn't mind living in Sting's rock star country mansion in Wiltshire. *The South Bank Show* (Sun ITV) manages a better sound round this mellow-bricked Jacobean pile than a recent *Hello!* feature, and Melvyn (having a bad hair day) gets quite a good take on this strangely Puck-ish man.

Can I suggest to the reader who wrote wondering about the contemporary meaning of the term "anorak" and "techno-nerd" to tune into *Triumph of the Nerds* (Sun C4), where all will be explained. This three-part series tells how young male techno-enthusiasts were the driving force behind the revolution that is putting personal computers into every home in the land. One such - Bill Gates - kicks off the series.



The big match

US Masters
Sat 8.05pm, Sun 9.05pm BBC2

As the cashmere-sweatered contestants tee up for the final rounds of the 60th US Masters, in the verdant setting of Augusta National, there will be several within driving distance of the coveted Green Jacket. Since Augusta's greens traditionally lightning-fast, are believed this year to be even faster, the advantage will be with the great putters such as Faldo. And what of gentle Ben Crenshaw (above), last year's champion? According to the bookmakers, he's not even in the running - but last year he took the prize as a 50-1 outsider. Anything can happen.

Saturday television and radio

BBC1

7.25 News; Weather (1505503).
7.30 Children's BBC: Imogee. 7.40 Willy Fog. 8.10 The Raccoons. 8.35 The Addams Family.
9.00 Live and Kicking. Music from young soul trio 3T, Jas Mann of Babylon Zoo (S) (44281868).
12.12 Weather (6950077).
12.15 Grandstand. 12.20 Football Focus. 1.00 News.
1.05 Athletics: the Buys International Road Races from Portsmouth. 1.55 Racing from Ascot; 2.00 Kestrel Novices Chase. 2.10 Touring Cars: highlights from the opening two rounds of the Auto Trader RAC British Touring Car Championship from Donington Park. 2.30 Racing from Ascot: 2.35 Ladbroke Handicap Hurdle. 2.45 Touring Cars. 3.05 Racing from Ascot: 3.10 Lethaby & Christopher Long Distance Hurdle. 3.20 Women's Hockey: Great Britain v the Netherlands from Milton Keynes. 3.50 Football Half-Times. 4.00 Hockey. 4.40 Final Score (S) (47711936).
5.15 News; Weather (1045503).
5.25 Regional News and Weather (1991077).
5.30 Stay Tuned! Tony Robinson looks at the work of animator Robert McKimson, the man behind Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck (S) (822313).
5.55 Big Break. Snooker and general knowledge with guests Steve Davis (who's also on *They Think It's All Over*, later) and Lee Richardson (S) (825400).
6.25 The New Adventures of Superman. Three German soldiers placed in suspended animation during World War II wake up in Metropolis with a spot of world domination on their minds (S) (790752).
7.10 Confessions. Mysterious crop circles in Northern Ireland explained - and a man confesses to taking advantage when mistaken for a priest. Simon Mayo is the bloke doing all the talking (S) (834955).
7.50 The National Lottery Live. Gary Wilmot gets the balls rolling (S) (241145).
8.05 Bugs 2/2. Concluding half of the yarn about a plot to stop the launch of a vital satellite (S) (156400).
8.55 News and Sport; Weather (Followed by National Lottery Update) (14918).
9.15 Avalanche (Paul Shapiro 1994 US). David Hasselhoff swaps the sand for the snow and takes on an unaccustomed bad-guy role in this in-humour adventure about a ruthless smuggler (Hasselhoff) setting off an avalanche which traps Michael Gross and his bickering children in their cabin (422771).
10.45 Match of the Day. Southampton v Manchester United (S) (2016874).
11.50 They Think It's All Over. Steve Davis and Gaby Roslin are the guests (R) (S) (258619).
12.20 The Legend of the Werewolf (Freddie Francis 1974 UK). That nice Dr Finlay, David Rintoul, can be seen in a younger incarnation as a zoo worker, in 19th-century Paris, with behavioural problems each full moon. Peter Cushing investigates (825955).
1.50 Weather (5413530). To 1.55am.
REGIONS. Wales: 3.05pm Rugby Union: Swalec Cup Semi-Final.

BBC2

6.00 Open University: Technology (7601042). 6.25 Maths (7793077). 6.50 Of Fish and People (8777619). 7.15 Classical Sculpture and the Enlightenment (6536706). 7.40 Light in Search of a Model (7636874). 8.05 Handel's Messiah (1476619). 8.30 Writers in the 1930s (8698145). 8.55 Why Do Peacocks Have Elaborate Tails? (8504752). 9.20 Learning to Learn (7008936). 9.45 A Robot in the Parlor (8488232). 10.10 Seeing Through Maths (4235145). 10.35 Wendepunkte (2437874). 11.00 Statistics (4402435). 11.25 A School for Our Times? (5566313). 11.50 Open Mind (6579023).
12.15 Shadow of the Hare (R) (S) (342961).
12.45 Oliver Twist (David Lean 1948 UK). The first and by far the best of three David Lean films showing today - a strikingly shot and edited version of the Charles Dickens novel, with Alec Guinness's master pickpocket Fagin so loathsome that he fell foul of Jewish groups in America. An edited version was released there in 1951. Also with Robert Newton and Kay Walsh (91314435).
2.35 Birthe Spirit (David Lean 1945 UK). Rather arch version of Noel Coward's scapland wartime comedy with Rex Harrison, Constance Cummings and Kay Hammond trading the repartee. Harrison is a novelist who summons up his dead first wife (Hammond) in a séance, only for her move in with him and his second wife. Cummings (69467023).
4.10 A Passage to India (David Lean 1984 UK). Muddled, over-rated version of EM Forster's culture-clash novel set in late 1920s India, with Lean seemingly more interested in the scenery than Forster's biting hatred of the Raj British. Judy Davis is good, however, as the young, hysterical Englishwoman who might or might not have been raped by her Indian host (92527752).
6.50 What the Papers Say. With Peter Bradshaw of the London Evening Standard (S) (566919).
7.05 News and Sport; Weather (429359).
7.20 Correspondent. Following ex-journalist star life Nastase's bid to be elected as mayor of his home town of Bucharest, Romania. Plus Martin Bell's final dispatch from Bosnia (S) (645503).
8.05 Golf - US Masters 1996. Steve Rider introduces live coverage from Georgia. See *The Big Match*, above (S) (7959226).
11.00 Court TV. The case of George Loeb Jr, who was accused of murder after he killed a man in what he claims was self-defence. But Loeb was a white supremacist and his victim was black (559351).
11.50 The Legend of the Werewolf (Freddie Francis 1974 UK). That nice Dr Finlay, David Rintoul, can be seen in a younger incarnation as a zoo worker, in 19th-century Paris, with behavioural problems each full moon. Peter Cushing investigates (825955).
1.50 Weather (5413530). To 1.55am.
REGIONS. Wales: 3.05pm Rugby Union: Swalec Cup Semi-Final.

ITV/London

6.00 GMTV 6.00 News; Weather. 6.10 Re:Wind. 6.30 Bananas in Pyjamas. 6.40 Eat Your Words. 7.10 Barney and Friends. 7.40 Disney's Wake Up in the Wild Room. 8.55 Mighty Morphin Power Rangers (6557508).
9.25 Telegatinicmagination. Guests this week include children's TV presenter Gareth Jones and John Pickard from *2Point4 Children* (S) (8613226).
10.25 Spate (R) (6925416).
10.55 It's Not Just Saturday. Drops in on a Star Trek convention (S) (9050665).
11.30 The Chart Show (R) (S) (71936).
12.30 Speakeasy Emma Forbes presents the problem page for young people, with advice from Dr Fintan Coyle. (R) (S) (58955).
1.00 News & Weather (16539936).
1.05 London Today The latest news. (Followed by LWT Weather) (16634435).
1.10 Champions League Special. Jim Rosenthal sets the scene for this Wednesday's semi-final, second-leg matches featuring Ajax, Juventus, Panathinaikos and Nantes. (S) (5906752).
1.45 Movies, Games and Videos (261042).
2.15 Carry on Screaming (Gerald Thomas 1966 UK). One of the best - and least screened entries - with Harry H Corbett, Kenneth Williams, Fenella Fielding, Joan Sims and Jim Dale sending up Hammer horror films (718435).
3.45 Airwolf (R) (S) (14348).
4.45 News; Sport; Weather (8386110).
5.05 London Tonight and Sport (8293706).
5.25 Batman (1800042).
5.45 Catchphrase. Roy Walker hosts. (S) (880706).
6.15 Barrymore. Provides a showcase for Bonnie Langford and Alvin Stardust (S) (849619).
7.15 The Shane Richie Experience. The guest appearances are by Cobra and Hunter from *Gladys*, and pop group 4Mandu (S) (477684).
8.05 Stars in Their Eyes. People impersonate Gilbert O'Sullivan, Kate Bush and Billy Fury (including Lottery Results) (S) (230416).
8.50 News; National Lottery Update; Weather (Followed by LWT Weather) (154413).
9.05 The Governor. Two prisoners claim Barfield has a corrupt warder. Janet McTeer investigates (S) (341077).
10.05 Robocop (Paul Verhoeven 1987 US). See *The Big Picture*, above (S) (270619).
11.50 Big Fight Special. Northern Ireland's Eamonn Loughran defends his WBO welterweight title against Mexican Jose Luis Lopez, and Scotland's Paul Weir attempts to regain the light-flyweight title from South Africa's "Baby" Jake Matlala (151333).
12.35 Pyjama Party (S) (405846).
2.00 Funny Business (S) (8025443).
2.25 Tropical Heat (R) (S) (7242085).
3.15 E! News Review (S) (102443).
4.05 G! News Followed by Night Shift (R) (5098366).
5.05 Coach (S) (2976288). To 5.30am.

Channel 4

6.10 Sesame Street (R) (6429961).
7.05 Little Dracula (R) (S) (5791690).
7.35 Super Mario Brothers (R) (7631329).
8.00 Trans World Sport (51313).
9.00 The Morning Line A preview of today's top racing. (6348).
10.00 The Greatest. Barry John and Nick Faldo under consideration (R) (S) (14110).
10.30 NBA 24/7. LA Lakers v San Antonio Spurs (R) (73954).
11.00 Gazzetta Football Italia (50400).
12.00 Sign On: Dear Women's Lib (S) (28226).
12.30 The Great Maratha (56597).
1.00 Suez (Allan Dwan and Otto Brower 1938 US). Tyrone Power plays 19th-century French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps - as bizarre as that seems - in this lavish Fox biopic co-starring Loretta Young (67662077).
2.45 Blood and Sand (Rouben Mamoulian 1941 US). Tyrone Power again, this time cast as a matador falling for seductress Rita Hayworth in this rehash of the 1922 Valentino classic (92677618).
5.05 British Omnibus (R) (S) (3500139).
6.30 Right to Reply (S) (874).
7.00 Channel 4 News Summary and Weather (554961).
7.15 Everybody's Baby: The Rescue of Jessica McClure (Mel Damski 1989 US). Dramatic reconstruction of the race to save the life of an 18-month-old girl who fell down a well in Texas in 1987. Starring Beau Bridges (10077690).
9.00 The Gaby Roslin Show. See Preview, above (S) (2771).
10.00 Drop the Dead Donkey (R) (S) (29955).
10.30 Infamous Addresses. See Preview, above (S) (346503).
11.05 Homicide - Life on the Street. An episode from Barry Levinson's drama series about a team of Baltimore homicide detectives (R) (S) (796139).
12.05 Murder in Oskankin Precinct. First Tuesday repeat (yes, that old following Moscow Murder Squad detectives across the old Soviet Union in search of the killer of a woman found dead in a Moscow flat (R) (545782).
1.05 The Stalker True-life crime, first shown in *Enrol Morris Interrogation Stories*, about ex-soldier Thomas McIlwaine, who was soon fired from the postal service before embarking on a bloody spree that left four dead (R) (S) (6433172).
1.25 Persistence of Memory. When a scientist enters an unstable computer simulation of his own creation, he finds himself at the heart of a murder investigation (R) (2179998).
1.55 The Secret of Shadows (Richard Vernon 1953 UK). Schoi pinball saloon owner Cesar Romero has the police after him when his victim mistress Silvia is stabbed to death. Victor Maddern, Kay Kendall and Edward Underdown pad out the cast (9451917). To 3.20am.

ITV/Regions

WELSH
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (58955). 1.40 Warner Cartoon (446074). 2.00 Airwolf (397059). 2.25 As You Sow (847822). 3.50 RoboCop (9143348). 5.20 Batman (1260232). 2.05am Funny Business (292607). 2.35am American Gladiators (4054356). 3.30am Film: Alpha, Bobby and Rose (90511). 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (84642).

TYNE-TEES/NUSSHIRE
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (58955). 1.40 Cartoon (94512874). 1.55 Film: Hannibal Brooks (96491085). 5.20 Batman (1260232). 12.35am Funny Business (292607). 1.05am Film: Road to Avonlea (1974578). 2.35am War of the Worlds (4054356). 3.30am Customs Classified (5871288). 4.10am Coach (4046337). 4.35am Cue the Music (9660733). 5.25-5.30am Sound Bites (7170511).

CORNWALL
As London except: 12.30pm Heartland (58955). 1.40 Movies, Games and Videos (58955). 2.10 Cartoon (94512874). 2.10 Cartoon (3454542). 2.25 RoboCop (9143348). 5.20 Airwolf (397059). 5.30 Body Heat (789023). 5.10 Central Match - Goals Extra (196944). 5.20am Film: (1260232). 4.05am Johnnie (83819998). 4.10am God's Gift (5802578). 5.00am Johnnie (83819998). 5.20-5.30am Asian Eye (7115530).

ITV
As London except: 12.30pm The Munders Today (58955). 1.10 West: House (5906752). 1.40 Movies: Road to Avonlea (1974578). 2.35am War of the Worlds (4054356). 3.30am Customs Classified (5871288). 4.10am Coach (4046337). 4.35am Cue the Music (9660733). 5.25-5.30am Sound Bites (7170511).

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SAC
As C4 except: 8.00am Transworld Sport (51313). 10.30 NBA (73954). 11.00 The Avengers (50400). 12.00 Sign On: Dear Women's Lib (S) (28226). 12.30 The RoboCop (9143348). 12.35am Funny Business (292607). 1.05am Film: Road to Avonlea (1974578). 2.35am War of the Worlds (4054356). 3.30am Customs Classified (5871288). 4.10am Coach (4046337). 4.35am Cue the Music (9660733). 5.25-5.30am Sound Bites (7170511).

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Our worst child abuse scandal must not be hushed up

A national scandal is unfolding in north Wales. A report into what could be Britain's most appalling child abuse case is being suppressed. The scandal is not just that at least 100, and possibly double that number, children were systematically abused, while in the "care" of the state in the 1970s and Eighties. It is that a 300-page report into the affair has not been published and there is little sign that it will be soon.

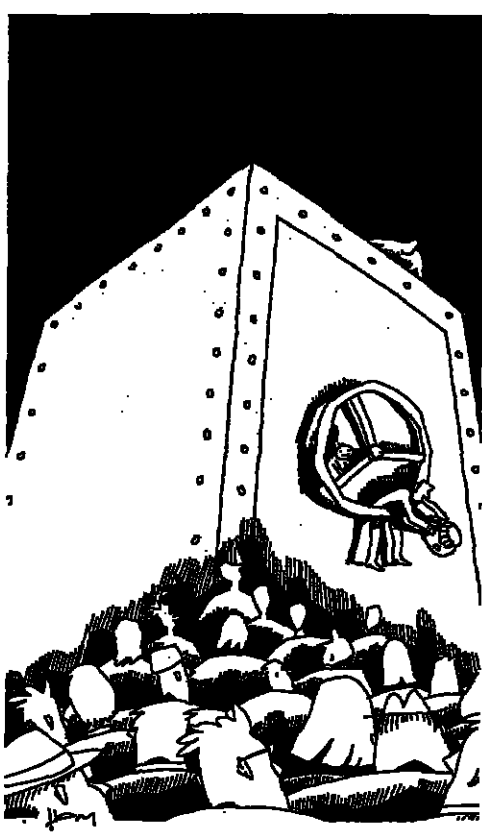
The scandal is one of the most organised and widespread cases of child abuse yet uncovered, involving a network of people in different local authority homes. At least 16 former inmates of the homes have since died, several through suicide, in circumstances that were related to their dreadful treatment. It is not as if the authorities were unaware of what has gone on. Since 1974, more than 50 staff have been disciplined and several have been convicted. Yet none of the 14 reports into the affair, 12 of them internal, has been published. This is a cover-up on a massive scale. The public is being denied information about how services operated in its name have been systematically exploited for the purposes of sexual abuse of the most vulnerable children. Victims are being denied access to the information they need for redress.

The latest and most comprehensive report was compiled by a team of three external childcare experts led by John Jillings, the former head of Derbyshire social services. It was commissioned last year by Clwyd County Council. Earlier this month, the council decided not to publish the Jillings report and demanded that all numbered copies of the document be handed in for pulp-

ing. It is said the council took this decision because it feared publication would lay it open to legal claims. There are some suggestions that the council's legal advisers warned that the report was libellous. Another suggestion is that the council's insurers, Municipal Mutual, warned councillors that the report would help the victims to pursue claims for damages against the council. The insurer is alleged to have warned the council that in those circumstances it would not provide cover for the claims against the council. There are still other allegations that this has provided the council with a convenient excuse for not publishing the report.

That is not the end of the story, though. Neither the insurance company nor the council exists any more. Clwyd County Council was swept away at the end of March in another wave of local government reorganisation. Responsibility for the report has now passed to Flintshire County Council, which has "administrative" responsibility for it. Pinning down the insurance company is just as difficult. Municipal Mutual, which was a leading local authority insurer, went bust in October 1992. Most of its business was then bought by Zurich Mutual, a Swiss giant. Zurich Mutual denies it has any responsibility for the case. It says it is a matter for Municipal Mutual, but Municipal Mutual is winding down.

So this is the situation. One of the worst child abuse scandals ever met with a wall of organised irresponsibility and buck passing. The history of abuse and mismanagement at the homes is compounded by the way the imperatives of the private insurance market and the secrecy of local



government have worked together to prevent publication of a vital report.

As a result, answers to even the simplest of questions are difficult to obtain: who is now responsible for deciding whether the report should be published? Put another way: whose report is it?

It seems the answer to both questions will be William Hague, the Secretary of State for Wales. A version of the Jillings report is sitting on Mr Hague's desk, awaiting his return from a trade mission to the United States. It is not Mr Hague's report. But, at the end of the day, in the highly imperfect world created by our system of local government, it seems that, politically, Mr Hague's office is the only place where a decision about publication can be taken.

That is not completely illogical. The Welsh Office is not immune from criticism. It is responsible for overseeing the funding of Welsh local authorities. It operates the system of inspections that so clearly failed to identify or do anything about abuse that took place over many years. Yet it is also an indictment of the way that the case has been handled that a decision on whether to publish the Jillings report should be taken only when the buck is passed all the way up to the Secretary of State.

One lesson from the affair is that the legal status of these reports needs to be clarified to make it clear what power insurance companies have over them. It is quite normal for there to be a conflict of interest between an insurance company and someone making a claim against it. However, where the interests of the insurance company

threaten to override the public interest, as they might do in this case, it should be perfectly possible to arrange exemptions. One step would be a voluntary code of practice adopted by insurers to make clear they will not prevent publication of information in the public interest. Zurich Mutual, for its part, says it would never seek to prevent a councillor making public such a report. It would simply point out, in the normal way, that claims against a policy would probably lead to loss of discounts or bonuses. There is nothing sinister in this; it's just normal insurance practice.

However, a better solution may be to give reports such as this special legal protection to make sure they can be published. One possibility might be that inquiries such as this should be conducted under the wing of a public watchdog answerable to Parliament, such as the National Audit Commission. This formalisation of the status of these reports would help the insurance companies. It would make it clear they had no influence over whether reports such as this could be published. That would put councillors squarely on the spot to take responsibility for making the information public. They could not hide behind the insurers. In the long run, the only way we can have any hope that scandals like the Clwyd will not occur again is if documents such as the Jillings report are made public and the lessons within them are learnt.

This is the most troubling issue Mr Hague has had to deal with since assuming his post. He should consider long and hard how to publish the report. But the answer to the big question is already clear: the report must be published and Mr Hague must order it to be published.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

National Lottery is a success

Sir: Your leader (11 April) about the National Lottery raises important issues about regulation and distribution of money to good causes.

Parliament decided on the distribution of money to good causes. Already the distributing bodies have made over 5,500 awards to projects the length and breadth of the country. As the number of awards increase, I will continue to keep under review the rules which allow the benefits of the National Lottery to be felt by people in every community.

I have already made changes to the rules on distribution. On 1 April I announced that lottery money could be used, for the first time, on developing the talents and potential of people such as talented athletes and sports people and individual performers and young artists.

The UK lottery is one of the most effectively regulated lotteries in the world. Parliament is the ultimate regulator. The National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee and the National Heritage Select Committee have all scrutinised various aspects of the organisation, regulation and distribution of lottery funds. It is wrong

to say that there has been little or no monitoring or research on the National Lottery. Ofot has conducted research using four different organisations over the last ten months.

Government research shows that the average household spent £2.10 per week after prizes in the first year of the lottery. This compares with an average weekly spend of over £5 on cigarettes and over £12 on alcohol.

This does not suggest excessive participation. But there will be further research, and I will continue to monitor the results of that work, taking appropriate action if it is justified.

In an extremely short period of time, the National Lottery has become the most dynamic national institution in Britain. It is the most successful of its kind in the world. It devotes one of the highest proportions of proceeds to good causes, and one of the lowest to running costs. I intend to ensure that it remains a success.

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY
Secretary of State for
National Heritage
Department of
National Heritage
London SW1

Pointing the gun at Liberia

Sir: The conflict in Liberia is not simply a chaotic tribal maelstrom ("30 Britons seek refuge in embassy", 10 April). At the heart of this tragedy lie struggles between political elites cynically exploiting disaffected young Liberians whose only opportunity for food, shelter, and a distorted sense of prestige comes from the barrel of a gun.

With over 1,200,000 people forced to flee their homes - swelled by a further 20,000 in the last five days - the immediate need for emergency aid to protect civilians from degrading conditions and cruel treatment is paramount.

However, if there is any chance of avoiding further conflict the United Nations and donors will have to act forth-

rightly to secure a durable political solution. Serious pressure must be brought to bear on the country's political leaders to reach a meaningful and accountable peace accord. At the same time the international community must provide constant support for efforts to demobilise, disarm, and reintegrate soldiers - most of them of school age - into civilian life.

If young fighters, who have known little but the tragedy of war, do not see they have an alternative to the gun, they will remain a destabilising force and future conflict is ever more likely.

PHILIP BLOOMER
Senior Policy Advisor
Oxfam UK and Ireland
Oxford

The true cost of lorry travel

Sir: It is a pity that Geoff Doss-etter, of the Freight Transport Association, skated so lightly over the cost to the country of lorry travel (Letters, 6 April).

His statement, "lorries pay taxes well in excess of their road-wear costs", hides more than it reveals. In fact, as recent work by David Pearce has shown, the true costs of lorry travel are very high. If the pollution, congestion, noise and deaths and serious injuries caused by heavy lorries are given a monetary value, they come nowhere near to paying their way.

Indeed, another study, *A New Framework for Freight Transport*, published by the Civic Trust, found that if heavy lorries were to pay their way, there would be such a substantial switch of freight to the railways that they would be able to run their freight trains, at profit, without receiving any subsidy from the Government. That is the environmentally-friendly and economically-sensible way forward.

JOHN STEWART
Chair, Alarm UK
London E3

Harness the spirit of London

Sir: Your comments about London ("London needs a mayor", 11 April) do less than justice to the range of London-wide initiatives now underway through groups such as ALG and London First.

We do indeed need a greater sense of civic pride but the public's response to the current series of debates on the future of London, initiated by the Architecture Foundation, demonstrates that there is a considerable collective spirit and a will to do better.

We now need to focus on practical measures to harness that spirit and need to move quickly. A Cities White Paper to match the recent Countryside White Paper would also help.

MICHAEL GWILLIAM
Director
Civic Trust
London SW1

Evidence of contamination from Chernobyl

Sir: In claiming that the Chernobyl death toll numbers hundreds of thousands the Ukrainian Government is likely to be correct ("Confusion as scientists dispute the death toll after Chernobyl", 10 April).

Chernobyl fallout was measurable not just in Scotland, but as far away as the US, where a number of health effects were identified. These included increases in thyroid cancer and neonatal hypothyroidism, despite the fact that doses from radio-iodine were between 1,000 and 10,000 times smaller than in Belarus and the Ukraine.

Cautious western scientists may concede that "the full picture" of health detriment will take years to emerge, but we do not have to wait. There is already plenty of evidence that where internal contamination is concerned, officially accepted perceptions of health hazard from man-made isotopes err by a factor of 1,000 or maybe

more. A reassessment of internal dosimetry is urgently needed.

RICHARD BRAMHALL
Low Level Radiation
Campaign
Builth Wells, Powys

Sir: Your editorial is right to identify both the need to close the two remaining Chernobyl reactors as soon as possible and the importance of G7 aid to help achieve this. However, the terms of the G7 deal on offer envisage the majority of the \$2.3bn being spent on the completion of two new nuclear reactors in Ukraine, with all the safety, environmental and economic problems this will inevitably entail. Such a course of action would only exacerbate the country's energy and economic problems.

Ukraine is one of the most energy intensive countries in the world, a combination of both large consumption by

heavy industry and poor efficiency in the whole energy sector. As prices for energy in the region reach world market levels, Ukraine will find itself increasingly unable to provide income to meet its fuel bills and the critical state of the country's economy will worsen.

If the G7 is serious about helping Ukraine, the grants and loans it can provide should be directed at improving the efficiency of energy use there. The G7 money invested in energy efficiency could obviate the need for the two new reactors, as well as allowing the closure of Chernobyl.

The UK knows that nuclear power is uneconomic. John Major should be calling for a sensible and sustainable energy policy at the forthcoming G7 meeting.

Yours faithfully,
BRIDGET WOODMAN
Greenpeace UK
London N1



The cormorant: under attack from anglers

Planet Earth

When to endorse the culling of cormorants

Sir: The cormorant debate is more complex than that described in Martyn Kelly's article (8 April).

The population explosion is largely made up of an inland breeding, continental subspecies rather than indigenous estuarine residents. Robin Wynde, for the RSPB outlines an excessively single-minded bird protectionist case. Conservation is far wider than this.

We seek to protect the genetically unique and rapidly diminishing stocks of Atlantic salmon in the lowland rivers of southern England. Examination of cormorant faeces by colleagues on the rivers Test and Itchen catchments give ample evidence of micro-tags from threatened juvenile salmon, devoured by these voracious immigrants. These fish stocks have been reared and introduced at great expense and effort by conservationists.

Scaring birds as a means of control is ineffective and, at best, simply moves the problem to an upstream or downstream neighbour.

The RSPB are not adverse to a cull when it suits their purpose. Have they not poisoned rats, crushed guilts' eggs and shot foxes in the past?

B G MARSHALL
Chairman
Wessex Salmon Association
Cambridge

Sir: The RSPB makes it clear that it will not flinch from endorsing the killing of cormorants, as part of a properly formulated scheme for scaring the birds away, should serious damage be proved. This has not been the case in the incidents which you report (8 April).

At the British Trust for Ornithology we are undertaking a contract for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and

Food, the Department of the Environment and the National Rivers Authority to do part of the basic research on these birds. Has there been an invasion of the southern race *sterna*, which is globally rather rare, into Britain to displace our traditional curlew bink? If they have come in are their habits different - in particular are they more likely to fish inland? What are the populations of breeding cormorants doing at the moment?

Your article mentioned an impossible increase in the cormorant colony at Abberton Reservoir in Essex. The breeding birds there have increased since last year was 507. In 1990 there were 356 pairs present and not 19,000.

CHRIS MEAD
British Trust for
Ornithology
Hilborough, Norfolk

Divorce terms

Sir: The divorce settlement between Mrs Churchill and myself is a personal matter between us. I have no intention of commenting publicly upon it beyond saying that your story ("Lottery may fund Churchill divorce", 11 April) is as fanciful as the one in the

William Hickory column of the *Daily Express* the previous day. The financial settlement involved bears no relation to the sum suggested in your columns.

WINSTON S CHURCHILL
MP for Darnley (Con)
House of Commons
London SW12

Angelic comment

Sir: If Kathy King supposes (11 October) that no one wants the Gateshead Angel, she ought to visit the exhibition in the Shipley Art Gallery, where comment in the visitors' book is predominantly favourable.

G N DOYLE
Gateshead

RUTH PICARDIE Jobs for the girls



The news this week has been dominated by three nice middle-class girls called Lisa, Liz and Di. Bright, ambitious, a few years apart in age, they could have been friends. Instead, they offer a lesson in the perils of female celebrity.

Here comes fresh-faced Lisa, wife of the disgraced former Barings trader Nick Leeson. When he fell to Earth, Lisa got on with her life, sensibly moved in with her parents in Kent, got a job as a part-time waitress. Now Lisa has become the world's first celebrity flight attendant, employed by the people at Virgin Atlantic. And why not? She likes to travel, she needs to travel. Now she's a waitress in the sky.

Good for you, Lisa. But how long will it last? Because you know how people talk: "Elizabeth? Wait in, please. What's all this about you having an affair. It's all over the Sun."

"Jeez Estée, it was years ago."

"Yeah, but who the hell is Tom Sizemore?"

"He's an actor, like my boyfriend. Except better."

"My dear Elizabeth, Hugh Grant happens to be a class act. Luminous, polished, refined."

"Class act? You call oral sex with a hooker a class act?"

Just kidding! As the people at Estée Lauder said when Liz's appointment was announced: "Her relationship with anyone else has nothing to do with our choice as spokeswoman."

Finally let's give a big welcome to Princess Di, wife of disgraced heir to the throne Prince Charles. When he fell to Earth, Di got on with her life, as mother, charity worker, ambassador for Britain. Good for you, Di. But how long will it last? Because you know how people talk:

"What are we going to do about this cellulite problem, your Highness? The Express called it 'poison deposits, like slime at the bottom of the river'."

"Oh, Max, you know as well as I that there's no such thing as cellulite. Women who get it bulimic and who don't go to the gym every day have wobbly thighs. It's a patriarchal conspiracy."

"But your Highness, you do go to the gym every day."

"Do I? Erm, that's because I used to be a princess and princesses have to be perfect. But I've been in therapy, and I'm a person in my own right now. Almost."

The moral? If you're going to be famous, get there on your own merits. Otherwise, you're only as good as the man who got you there in the first place.

QUOTE UNQUOTE

Mr Major should get into his government car, drive to Buckingham Palace and tell Her Majesty: "We have tried, we have failed, we are off" - Brian Jenkins, after winning the Staffordshire South East by-election for Labour

For the Christian, to mix religion and politics is not an option - it is an obligation - The Venerable George Austin, Archbishop of York

What makes people pay money to go to a show and then throw things at the band? - Oasis spokesman, after the group walked off stage after being pelted with coins and metal objects at a concert in Vancouver, Canada

The more I study human beings, the more I love animals - Doris Day, veteran film star and animal rights campaigner

There are signs that newer, younger members of the House of Commons, many of whom are unable to read or write, are behaving above themselves, fretting against any restrictions on their behaviour - Auberon Waugh

The Government may say most crime is drug related. It is not. It is prohibition related - Howard Marks, former marijuana smuggler, at the opening of a cannabis information centre in London

GILLIAN O'SULLIVAN
High Roding,
Essex

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

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comment

'Tony Blair – he seems a sensible guy'

America gave the Labour leader a welcome worthy of a PM, says Rupert Cornwell

"He looks so young," more than one distinguished guest wonders over dinner at the British Ambassador's residence on Thursday, in honour of the visiting Tony Blair. But what do youth and inexperience matter on a night like this?

After a savage winter, spring is at last to be savoured in the capital of the free world. No less intoxicating, proceedings are briefly interrupted to allow the evening's main attraction to give a first reaction to his latest triumph, victory in the Staffordshire South East by-election. Not only is the man a winner, but many of America's mighty can now see it for themselves. God surely has been doing the scheduling for Tony Blair this week. And even the politically neutral Englishman in Washington may be forgiven for saying, "Not before time."

If truth be told, the Britain that now adorns America's TV screens and newspapers is a rather run-down little theme-park, full of strange, colourful but ultimately inconsequential events. Northern Ireland, in which the Clinton Administration has deeply involved itself, is of course the exception. Otherwise, our recent contributions to the omnivorous news cycles of the US mass media have been mostly tacky, bizarre and tragic – the continuing misadventures of the House of Windsor, mad cows and the massacre at Dunblane.

If only to that extent, Tony Blair has been a refreshing exception. Not that Blairmania is sweeping the nation: neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* carried a word about his visit. But that is far from the course in a place where at a press conference with the Israeli prime minister, the principal question a US president had to answer concerned not the Middle East peace process, but allegations of past adultery. (The president in question was not the much-bruited philanthropist Bill Clinton, for whom such badgering is routine. It was gentleman George Bush in August 1992.)

But by the disquiet, celebrity-driven standards of the two cities he has visited, Mr Blair has not put a foot wrong. Breakfast in New York with Henry Kissinger (therein lies true gravitas) to start the day on Thursday, and a drinks party here at the home of the jour-

nalist Sidney Blumenthal, the author of a glistening and much-noted *New Yorker* profile of the Labour leader, followed by the Embassy dinner attended by Colin Powell and others to wrap it up.

Yesterday saw more of the same – a 7.15am interview on *Fox Morning News*, where the capital's political junkies get their morning fix, to talk about the "stunning" by-election win, proof of New Labour's appeal across the political spectrum, "the ability to bring the country together, what we sometimes call One-Nation politics". Then it was breakfast with the editorial board of the *Washington Post*, and later a National Press Club appearance and a lunch thrown by Roon Arledge, head of ABC-TV news, to meet Washington's assembled punditocracy.

All that and a meeting at the White House with the President. Already a conventional wisdom appears to be gelling: "Tony Blair – he seems a sensible guy." America, in other words, is being reassured: this is a man you can go tiger shooting with. All in all, a fair day's work for Jonathan Powell, Mr Blair's chief of staff and a key planner of the trip, as he cashed in the contacts he had built up during his previous incarnation as a political counsellor at the embassy here.

But the meetings that mattered most here were those of which we heard least. In New York, the financier George Soros, forever remembered as slayer of sterling on Black Wednesday (16 September 1992), bestowed a public blessing of the foreign exchange markets upon Mr Blair, declaring that a Labour victory "would not cause a scare among international investors".

Not a word, though, has filtered out of the meetings with Robert Rubin, the Federal Reserve chairman, and Alan Greenspan, the Treasury Secretary, keepers of America's purse, whose trust in a Labour government will be no less important than that of Mr Clinton, with whom Mr Blair is so often compared. They too were perhaps startled by his youth but impressed far more by his insistence that Labour is no longer the tax-and-spend party of old. For that reason, above all, a prime minister-in-waiting has been treated this week almost as a prime minister in office.

PROFILE

The cleverest bird on two legs

No wonder investors were drawn to the ostrich. It's a remarkable success, says Nicholas Schoon

The ostrich is renowned for its stupidity, but it is the thousands of investors in the stricken Ostrich Farming Corporation who are feeling foolish this weekend. When they sent off their cheques for thousands of pounds to buy one of the birds their heads must surely have been buried somewhere in the sand. Surely "guaranteed" rates of return of at least 50 per cent from such an unlikely investment should have aroused suspicion.

This was not a biotechnology company about to reap huge returns from a major advance in genetics. Nor was it an emerging market fund, feeding off the prodigious growth of developing market economies in South-east Asia. This was an investment in a bird. And a bird which has a reputation for stupidity at that.

There were some warnings in the press: that an ostrich was not an investment covered by the usual compensation arrangements underwritten by law; that the OFC's managing director Brian Ketchell had had business failures earlier in his career. The corporation's offices on a wooded business park near Mansfield in Nottinghamshire are empty.

will be a market for their tasty red meat and soft leather hides.

Of course this is not the first time investors have been suckered into an investment of obvious ridiculousness. In the 17th century, the Dutch lost fortunes on a tulip investment bubble. There was more recently a fashion for investment in angora goats for their fine wool (how often do you see people wearing them?). Yet in the history of such exotic livestock investment opportunities none seems quite so fitting as the stupid ostrich.

But we should be wary of writing off the ostrich quite so confidently. For ostriches are not stupid, at least not for a bird. They have simply had some ridiculously bad press.

No ostrich has ever been documented as sticking its head in the sand to hide from a threat. The idea that they ever did probably arose from their habit of lying their long necks and head flat on the ground when sitting on the nest, the better to hide themselves from predators. Quite clever, really.

When a group of them is surprised they scatter at top speed in all directions. That makes them look silly, but it is a sensible strategy



A captive ostrich will swallow nails and glass to help it to digest its food

Photograph: Ian Derry

eggs over a few weeks. Other females, which may have no more space in their own nests, pop in to add eggs of their own without the resident mother complaining.

If more eggs are laid than she can cover with her wings and body (36 is not unusual) she begins to cast some out. To us, all the eggs look the same, but fieldwork by Dr

No, the case for the ostrich goes even further than this, if you take the broad, biological view. How did a bird that lost its ability to fly become an evolutionary success story, covering the arid and semi-arid regions of all Africa and spreading into Arabia? Imagine what would have happened to us if a vital function, such as the ability to walk, was taken away from us? Seen in that light the ostrich must be a remarkably clever bird to have survived, despite such disadvantages. It is a bird that can compete with mammals on their own terms and survive; no mean feat.

And do not underestimate the street-fighting instincts of a bird that has managed to prosper despite such deprivations. The ostrich may be a vegetarian by nature, but corner a 15-stone, 6ft tall adult and it can turn vicious. Each foot bears two toes that can rip a human body open; several people have been killed by them.

At the start of the Nineties only a few dozen ostriches were being raised in Britain but today there are 10,000 (so if they all get angry and out of control at the same time there could be a riot).

Indeed the farming of the ostrich

may be the latest act in its defiance of evolutionary gravity. Wild ostrich populations have been hard hit by hunting and habitat destruction. They have become extinct in Saudi Arabia; the North African subspecies is endangered. So perhaps their move into farming is a shrewd one; in the next century their captive population will probably outnumber the wild one. Once again they seem set to beat the evolutionary odds which are stacked against them.

Even in captivity, in Britain at least, farmed ostriches have escaped battery farming. They are the only farm animal covered by the Dangerous Wild Animals Act. Anyone who keeps them has to have a licence granted annually by the local council, which sets conditions for how they are kept.

Three years ago Dr Bertram was commissioned by the RSPCA to draw up ostrich farming standards. He stipulated that they should have access to growing vegetation outdoors, and there should be no more than 15 birds per acre. Councils will not usually grant a licence unless these standards are met. Clever bird to have got such comfortable quarters.

Ostriches are not stupid, at least not for a bird. They have simply had some ridiculously bad press

The Department of Trade and Industry put the company into receivership last week. Now the Serious Fraud Office and two police forces are on the trail of its ostriches.

The firm's collapse has pricked the bubble of Britain's ostrich farming boom. Hardly any ostrich meat is sold or eaten in this country; there is not a single ostrich abattoir. But in the past few years, tens of thousands of pounds have poured into buying, keeping and breeding the birds, in the hope that one day there

egy for confusing a serious predator such as a lion.

They abandon eggs in large numbers, pushing them out of their big earthen nests to form a "doomed ring" of unincubated ovoids. That appears deeply foolish.

But, as the ostrich expert Dr Brian Bertram explains, it turns out to be an exercise in ingenuity. Ostrich nests are a sort of collective. Dig out by the male, they are attended by one female who lays the bulk of the 5lb creamy white

Bertram and colleagues in East Africa has shown that the resident female almost never ejects any of her own. Clever of her, don't you think?

Captive ostriches are notorious for eating the inedible – nails, bits of glass and other sharp objects, which then do them great harm. But this seems slightly less stupid when you consider that, in the wild, they regularly swallow largish stones to help grind up vegetable food in their gizzards.

A rosbif open a restaurant in Paris?

Sir Terence Conran might teach the French a thing or two about dining out, says Jonathan Glancey

When it comes to the art of eating Nineties-style, no man, woman or child is an island. We have come to eat an atlas of food for breakfast, dinner, lunch and tea. In the same restaurant, modern diner duck into food trawled from the world's oceans and cooked in styles adopted from as far afield as Yucatan and Yakutsk. All's fare, it would appear, in the war to win the contemporary appetite.

The idea, then, that Sir Terence Conran, gourmet, man of taste and, above all, francophile, might open a restaurant in Paris is surely an innocuous one. Not so, if you happen to be the patron of a Parisian restaurant.

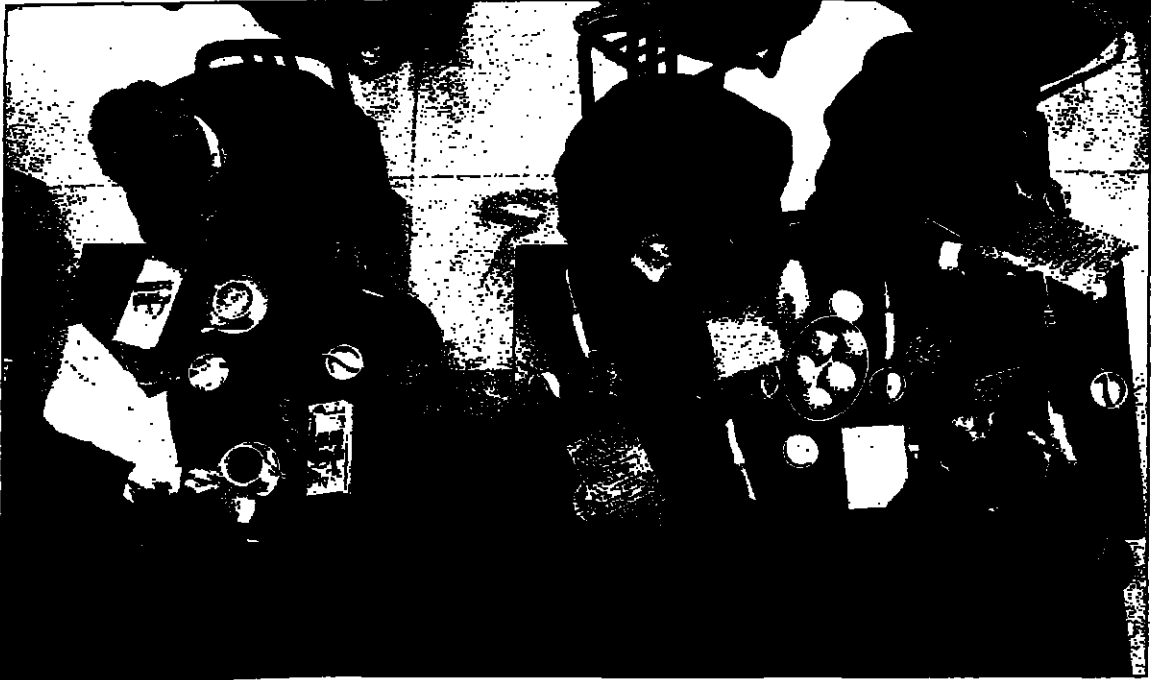
Sir Terence has recently been sniffing out potential sites, though he is in no great hurry and says he is more likely to open a restaurant in Manhattan before Paris.

Even so, garlic-tainted bile has been rising in the throats of potential Parisian rivals as news of Sir Terence's search has seeped through the world of *grande cuisine*.

In chic St-Germain-des-Près, in the heart of Paris, the manager of a popular brasserie says he is pessimistic about the idea. "The Conran style of restaurants, where the food is a mix of ingredients and flavours from around the world, is something," he hisses, "that might be in fashion at the moment, however, in my opinion, if it is well planned and organised, a Conran restaurant may last six months or even a year."

"I'm not sure," he continues as waiter-skimmer by, "that the Conran idea will go down well. It does not have a strong enough theme: the principle of mixing different styles of food is not a French one. In any case, there is such a huge choice of different cuisines in Paris that I really cannot see a gap in the market." Well, what did you expect him to say?

Sir Terence, a man for whom Paris has been food and drink for 40 years, is used to the restaurant establishment



Tasteful: Quaglino's, Sir Terence Conran's updated version of a Parisian brasserie

Photograph: David Rose

saying his latest venture will fail. Folly, said the experts, to buy Michelin House, in which today you will find Bibendum, one of the choicest restaurants in London. Folly, too, they crowded, to reopen Quaglino's, the zooty, old society restaurant in London's St James's. Yet, this updated variation on the theme of a voluminous Parisian brasserie is packed to its gunwales day in, day out. Daft, they said, to open a grand, French-style restaurant in the shadow of Tower Bridge. Yet Pont de la Tour has been a glittering success.

Mezzo. Sir Terence's cavernous, late-night Soho "gastrodome", opened last year and was clearly doomed to failure. It would spoil Soho. It hasn't. Instead, Mezzo has brought increased, mable and hungry trade to the area, unable to cope with the bridge-and-tunnel

hordes who bear down on its highly wrought interiors on weekends.

It seems unlikely, after these experiences, that rivals will say the same about his up-and-coming eateries in Chelsea (a conversion of the old Bluebird garage, King's Road) and the City of London (an oyster-bar restaurant, based on the one that has delighted generations of New Yorkers at Grand Central station, in the old Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street station).

Can the same Conran magic be exported to proud, chauvinistic and defensive culinary Paris? "Oh, I think so," says Sir Terence confidently. "Paris has some wonderful restaurants, but many of the best are living in the past. If you want to see the future, I'd tell any Parisian to come to London."

"I'd love to have a go at a truly mod-

ern restaurant in Paris. I'm not interested in aiming for the very top of the market – Michelin three-star territory – because there you'll find that very superior type of restaurant the French do best," he says. "I don't think they're much fun, even if the food is exquisite, of its sort. And the food is still, too often for my taste anyway, over-decorated and over-sauced. They're also far too haughty. They make me feel nervous, which is silly if I'm being asked to pay £100 a head to eat in them."

"No, I think eating out should be fun. I also like the current English idea of chefs being allowed to experiment day to day. In the grandest Parisian restaurants, tradition tends to rule the roost."

While Parisians are able to indulge in a every sort of food, they tend to eat these in themed or "ethnic" restaurants. They do not expect to find

dishes invented on brasseries fronting Bondi Beach to be served in La Tour d'Argent (Henry IV came here for the heron paté in the 16th century) or Alain Senderen's wood-paneled Lucas-Carton, place de la Madeleine.

If they want Vietnamese, they will eat in the city's popular Vietnamese restaurants, and if they want cous-cous, they will plump for perennially popular Moroccan restaurants. In recent years, Tex-Mex food (call that cooking?) has made heavy inroads into the Parisian pallet, but this is consumed solely in kitsch Tex-Mex hangouts.

The barn-like old brasseries – Bofinger, Lipp, Flo, Chartier, La Coupole – that have so influenced Sir Terence continue to dish out reliable, but not especially wonderful, food in gloriously atmospheric surroundings (old ladies spoon-feeding puddles, that sort of thing), but few Parisian restaurants offer the eclectic menus we have come to expect in London.

"I love Paris," says Sir Terence, "but I don't think Parisian restaurants can afford to be too smug. After all, what can you say about a city that has seen the rapid spread of a chain of fast food joints called F'unch? And, if Parisians are not tucking into 'funch', they have their noses in a polystyrene container hot from the city's favourite restaurant chain, McDonald's."

"If I want to eat in a very grand old restaurant in the grand French tradition, of course, I'll head for Paris. But, that's something I don't want to do all that often. And, I don't think all that many Parisians want to, either. The restaurant world is changing and, I think, very much for the better. Paris shouldn't want to be a museum of haute cuisine, and I don't think, whatever anyone says, it will allow itself to be."

Which means that when Sir Terence Conran opens his first French restaurant, it will be less of a case of sending duck à l'orange to Paris and more a matter of offering Parisians a taste of duck au Conran.

LIBERIA

Save the Children

Right now, Children are dying in Liberia

The fighting in Liberia has escalated dramatically. Children have been forced to flee their homes and villages, dodging bullets and mortar fire. *There is no embassy for them to run to.* Many children have received horrific injuries and lost one or both parents. *Thousands of children face possible death.*

As little as £10 will help provide food, medical supplies and care for those in the most urgent need. We can help the children, but only if we act now and only with your help.

Please send a donation today and help us care for children.

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Or charge my: ☐ Access ☐ AmEx ☐ Visa ☐ Diners ☐ CAP Card

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Save the Children

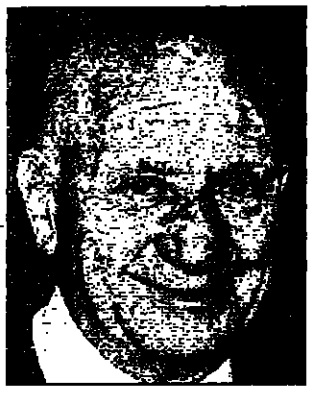
Registered Charity No. 213890 London SE5 8BR

obituaries/gazette

Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet

The history of advertising in France is unusual. Newspapers were slow to make space for publicity. It was widely held that advertising meant corruption (and so it did when Marcel Proust had to pay both journalists and newspaper in order to get a favourable review). But, just as the French overcame their reluctance to have anything to do with the banks or with the stock exchange, so advertising and publicity have become a vital part of national activities. Were proof needed one has only to look at the eulogies delivered for Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet, on his death at the age of 89. One left-wing journal hailed him on its front page as the Pope of Publicity, "le Pape de la Pub".

Of course, every country is proud of its rags-to-riches citizens. Bleustein, as he was called, was born in 1906 of a Jewish family living in Montmartre. He attended the local school where his main preoccupation was to sit near the stove in winter and near the door in summer. He left as soon as possible carrying with him a certificate which stated that he was able to read, to write and to count. Bleustein never tired of telling the story, always



Bleustein-Blanchet: hailed as 'le Pape de la Pub'

adding that mention should have been made that he was also able to speak. An ability to converse, together with a supreme self-confidence, explains his success.

For a time he worked in the furniture business of Leviten (he was related to the family) and then set up in two small rooms on the Faubourg-Montmartre as a publicity agent. At first it was difficult and he found that possible customers did not know what he was talking about. But he inspired confidence. His agency, Publicis, was founded in 1926 ("cis" for "six", in French) and in 1929 he first had the idea of using the radio for publicity purposes; it was an immense success. Reputedly in this year he became a millionaire.

Bleustein used every method to promote himself. On one occasion he booked a table for dinner in Maxim's and, when the restaurant was full, went round all those who were dining there, the smartest of the smart, introduced himself and shook hands. People were puzzled, but informed.

In 1934 the austere Georges Mandel became minister responsible for the Post Office and its services, and he banned all advertising on radio. Bleustein was ruined. But he picked himself up and created his own radio station, Radio Cité. The risk paid off. It was a great success, thanks to the artists who appeared there, including many who were becoming famous, such as Tino Rossi, Charles Trenet, Edith Piaf and Jean Sablon.

And Bleustein was the inventor of the advertising slogan. His phrases were repeated on the radio and throughout France. Many are still remembered. In the days of furs and fur coats, there was the unforgettable "Brunswick, le fourreur qui fait fureur". Bleustein

was part of French life.

In 1939 he served in the air force. In 1940 the Germans took over Radio Cité and looked for its owner, who spent some time in a Spanish prison before joining de Gaulle. He then adopted the name of Blanchet and was on the staff of General Koenig, who was one of the first Free French leaders to land in France.

Back in France he brought many Gaullists into the publicity business, although Albert Camus was bitterly disappointed not to have his financial support for a progressive newspaper. Instead, Bleustein-Blanchet collaborated with Pierre Lazareff (with whom he had been at school) for the paper *France-Solr*. Installed in the buildings of the Hotel Astoria on the Champs-Élysées (which were burned down in 1972 but rebuilt), he knew everyone and was alert to a France that was rapidly changing. Who else would have told de Gaulle in 1958 that he had no idea of how he should appear on television? (And de Gaulle took his advice.) Who else would have installed a drug-store on the Champs-Élysées and in the Latin Quarter?

Bleustein-Blanchet was one of the first to understand the importance of public opinion polls, in commerce and in politics, and he was instrumental in organising what has become a minor industry and an inescapable facet of French life. In 1939 he married Sophie Vaillant, the granddaughter of Edouard Vaillant, one of the founding fathers of French socialism.

Douglas Johnson

Marcel Bleustein, advertising and publicity entrepreneur; born Paris 1906; married 1939 Sophie Vaillant (three daughters); died Paris 11 April 1996.



Gerardine Fitzgerald and Alexander Knox in *Wilson* (1944). The film won McLean an Oscar

Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

Margaret McLean

Whether due to feminism or the triumph of trivia there has been an increasing fascination with the role of women in Hollywood, from the ideology of physical glamour to the practicalities of the technical work they have been allowed to perform there. Barbara McLean, who died at a suitably mythic 92, was not only a beautiful woman in a manner appropriate to the golden age of Californian cinema, she was also, more importantly, a revered editor who perhaps single-handedly established women as vital creative figures in an otherwise patriarchal industry.

McLean was nominated for no less than seven Oscars for her cutting ways, finally winning the award in 1944 for *Wilson*, and without her film editing would never have developed into the female speciality, "ghetto" some might say, it has become in America at least.

McLean had an advantage in that she had been chopping and gluing since girlhood in her father's film laboratory in New Jersey, and when she moved to Los Angeles in 1924 she continued this paternalistic pattern by becoming the adopted protégée of Darryl F. Zanuck, the notorious 20th Century Fox chief. In fact Zanuck relied upon "Bobbie", as she was called by those who dared, for almost all his artistic decisions over several decades, and when he pronounced "Bobbie says..." it meant the matter was settled. Thus it was on Bobbie's recommendation that Tyrone Power was hired for *Lloyd's of London* and became a star, Zanuck deferring to her opinion in every area of the business from costumes to composers and composition.

McLean was head of Fox's editing for over 20 years and personally edited all of Zanuck's

projects, her dedication being legendary whether watching a film 100 times before making a final cut or spending hours on the set noting the director at work. One of her regular collaborators was Henry King, and when he was shooting *The Captain from Castile* in 1947 she flew down to Mexico repeatedly to confer on the cutting, believing that a thorough editor should have seen a film's development all the way through. Beginning in 1934 with *The House of Rothschild* and *The Affairs of Cellini*, McLean went on to edit innumerable films, everything from classics such as *All About Eve* to the improbably titled *The Magnificent Seven*. Amongst her last films was *The Untamed* (1955), but far from being tamed herself by old age or changes in technology McLean only officially retired from Fox in 1969.

Whether her exceptional

slicer and splicer's eye was inherited from her family or was due to her musical studies as a child which ensured she could cut a musical to the beat, there can be no contradicting Ronald Davis's description in his 1993 book *The Glamour Factory*: "Creative, imaginative, and expert in her art, McLean was also quiet, efficient and co-operative." If that sounds like a patronising male qualification it can only seem radical by comparison with McLean's own theory on why women make better editors than men: "Because every woman is at heart a mother. A woman uses the scissors on a film like a mother would, with affection and understanding and tolerance."

Adrian Dannatt

Barbara McLean, film editor; born Palisades Park, New Jersey 1904; died Newport Beach, California 28 March 1996.

Elaine O'Beirne-Ranelagh

From folklore to feminism, from music to Mussolini, from American music to Irish nationalism and rugby jokes, Elaine O'Beirne-Ranelagh had a richly varied life, in which her strong individualism and perceptive intellect enabled her to make contributions well ahead of her time.

Born Elaine Lambert Lewis in New York in 1914, she took a degree in Classics at Vassar before moving to the University of Indiana to study folklore. In 1933 she won a Guggenheim Fellowship to Rome to study Italian fairy tales. She met Mussolini at a reception and spent much of the rest of her stay in Italy fighting off his advances.

Returning to America, she developed a strong interest in native music, particularly negro spirituals and slave music, and was one of the first to record and broadcast authentic jazz. Her radio programme *Folk-songs for the Seven Million* on WNYC brought the music of Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter) to a wide audience for the first time. Equally at home with

academics or poor black musicians, she was appreciated for her perfect manners and total indifference to class and social divisions. Those qualities must have been indispensable in the early years of her romance, marriage and transplantation to the wilds of Ireland.

Elaine Lambert Lewis met James O'Beirne-Ranelagh – the O'Beirne-Ranelagh to anyone with respect for the Irish clans – through a shared passion for Irish folklore. When he gathered some Irish friends together to perform on her special St Patrick's Day radio programme, they even added authentically by wrecking the studio with a genuine Irish brawl. When Elaine was James's guest at a special dinner of an Irish-American society, admiration was expressed for the calmness with which she picked broken glass from her plate and continued with the meal after a rival Irish-American group had brought the chandelier crashing down on the table.

They married and he took her back to Ireland. She told the

story of how an urban, educated, sophisticated American woman found herself landed in the outback, with no electricity or running water, and with four children to bring up, in *Himself and I* (published in 1957 under the pseudonym of Anne O'Neill-Barna). "I heard references to his being a member of the IRA," she wrote, "and hadn't the remotest idea what it meant – I mean folk-tales never went into that."

The book, a hilarious account of naïveté, Irishness and inspired improvisation, might perhaps have been more widely read had it not been banned by the Catholic Church – though its author was never quite sure whether that was because of disparaging remarks made about a local priest, or the detailed description it contained of how turkeys mate.

Economic circumstances, and a desire to secure a good education for her children, forced a move to England, where she worked for the US Air Force lecturing at a base near Cambridge on Classics,

English and folklore. She also tried her hand at romantic fiction, with a novel, *Wentworth Hall*, appearing in 1974. She always admitted to finding the Mills & Boon style difficult to master "because the characters keep getting away from me". What she found so taxing was the need to make intelligent women characters act stupidly. Perhaps that experience sowed the seeds for *Men on Women* (1985), a historical survey of men's assumptions about women, showing that male attitudes – consistent at different periods of history and in diverse cultures – are apparently inescapable. Her views on this subject, however, both predated and enhanced conventional feminism. She never saw the need to fight for feminine equality, having been one of the first wave of women who genuinely believed, and demonstrated, that they were equal.

That book and the earlier *The Past We Share* (1979) – a study of the part of our culture we owe to the Arab world – form her major academic publications,

though she did also write a successful series of paperbacks in the 1970s and 1980s including *Rugby Jokes*, *Son of Rugby Jokes*, *What Rugby Jokes Did Next* and eight similar titles. She researched these with her customary rigour, using a wide string of contacts to gather material. The best, *Rugby Jokes in the Office* (1989), broke new ground in sociological research by collecting amusing items that office workers photocopy and stick on noticeboards.

The *Rugby Jokes* series as a whole, however, caused consternation among her children, who found the jokes neither dirty nor funny, and led them to suspect their mother understood neither sex nor humour. Mussolini, and many others who had been captivated by her wit, would not have agreed.

William Harston

Elaine Lambert Lewis, writer and broadcaster; born New York 6 July 1914; married 1946 James O'Beirne-Ranelagh (died 1982; one son, three daughters); died London 5 April 1996.



O'Beirne-Ranelagh: 'Folk-tales never went into that'

Benjamin Eisenstadt

Benjamin Eisenstadt was the man who made the sugar spoon obsolete and went on to develop the low calorie sweetener Sweet'N Low. He followed a circuitous route to great fortune and was well known in his later years as a philanthropist and a major benefactor to the Maimonides Medical Center in New York.

The son of Russian immigrants, Eisenstadt was born in 1906 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and appeared headed for a career as a lawyer after he graduated from St John's University law school in 1929. The Depression spoiled his chances and he took a job working in his father-in-law's cafeteria before opening one of his own, the Cumberland, near the naval shipyard in Brooklyn in 1940.

Providence struck again when the end of the Second World War left Eisenstadt bereft of customers and, recalling an uncle who had once operated a company that filled tea-bags, he turned the cafeteria into a tea-bag factory, the Cumberland Packing Company. Overwhelmed by existing suppliers and faced with another business failure, Eisenstadt realised that the same equipment could be used to put sugar in little paper bags.

At a time when restaurants still used open sugar bowls and sugar spoons his idea was revolutionary. Unfortunately Eisenstadt was still naïve and showed his invention to the existing sugar giants who promptly set up their own sugar-packet productions and soon had America, and later the world, shaking its sugar before sweetening its hot drinks.

Eisenstadt's luck changed in 1957 when, tinkering with his chemistry-educated son, he mixed saccharin, which was only available as a liquid or pill and restricted for use for diabetics and the obese, with dextrose. Taking care to patent what was the first granulated low-calorie sugar substitute, he named the product Sweet'N Low after the Tennyson poem and distinguished it from white sugar packets with a pink packet printed with a treble-clef musical logo.

This time his timing was perfect and he rode the crest of the 1960s health craze to fortune. He later developed an even lower-calorie sugar substitute branded Equal and sold in blue packets, as well as a butter substitute, Butter Buds, and a salt substitute, Nu-Salt.

Despite increased competition, the company, which still manufactures on the site of the cafeteria, turns over \$100m a year, employs 400 people and turns out 50 million packets of Sweet'N Low a day from a global web of plants including ones in England, India, Israel and Canada.

Edward Helmore

Benjamin Eisenstadt, entrepreneur and philanthropist; born New York 23 December 1906; married Betty Gellman (two sons, two daughters); died New York 8 April 1996.

Agon Sulaj, football coach, died Tirana 8 April, aged 44. Albanian National Team Coach 1985-90.

Marco Barnelli, superbike rider, died Monza, Italy 8 April, aged 29. Killed in a crash in an Italian championship race.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

HORTON: Olivia (nee Murphy), aged 34. At the Royal Marsden Hospital, London, on 10 April. Beloved daughter of Josephine Bryant, and the late Brian Murphy; sister of Judith and Caspar; partner of Paul. Lively funeral will take place at 12 noon, on Thursday 18 April, at Honor Oak Crematorium, Brockley Way, London SE4. Friends and colleagues all warmly welcomed. Family flowers only please, but any donations to the Royal Marsden Hospital, London SW3.

KLEIN: Josephine Parfitt Klein died on 11 April, aged 67. Funeral (two black small bunches of flowers only) will be held at St Marylebone Cemetery, East Finchley, 11.30 Wednesday 17 April.

IN MEMORIAM

SWAININATHAN: Malati. In everlasting memory of our dear sister and cousin who left us on 9 April 1988. Forever in our hearts. Venka, Bettie, Nikhil, Ayesha.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax to 0171-293 2010. Notices are charged at 65p a line (VAT extra).

Changing of the Guard

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Tomorrow: by the Irish Guards. Tomorrow: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Guard at Horse Guards, 10am. F Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Band provided by the Scots Guards.

Birthdays

TODAY: Miss Audrey Barker, author, 78; Mr Stephen Byers MP, 43; Air Vice-Marshal Sir Bernard Chacksfield, 83; Mr Frank Chamberlain, chairman, Test and County Cricket Board, 71; The Hon Alan Clark, former government minister, 68; The Right Rev Roderic Coote, former Bishop of Colchester, 81; Mr Liam Cosgrave, former leader of the Fine Gael party in the Republic of Ireland, 76; Mr Beverley Cross, playwright, 62; Lord Davidson, a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 67; Mr Peter Davidson, actor, 45; Mr Stanley Donen, film director and producer, 72; Mr Edward Fox, actor, 59; Professor Albert Halsey, sociologist, 73; Sir Jeremiah Harman, High Court judge, 66; Air Marshal Sir Kenneth Hay, former Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, Ministry of Defence, 61; Mr Seamus Heaney, poet, 57; Sir Peter Hepp, former ambassador to Brazil, 61; Mr Garry Kasparov, chess champion, 33; Mr Howard Keel, singer and actor, 77; Canon John Kelly, former principal, St Edmund Hall, Oxford, 87; Mr Jonjo O'Neill, racehorse trainer, 44; Dame Margaret Price, opera singer, 55; Sir Stephen Roberts, former chairman Milk Marketing Board, 81; Miss Barbara Roche MP, 42; Mr Christopher Strain, actor, 50; Lord Wedderburn of Charlton, Professor Emeritus of Commercial Law, London School of Economics, 69; Miss Eudora Welty, novelist, 87; Sir John Weston, ambassador and UK Permanent Representative to Nato, 58; Lt-Gen Sir James Wilson, former chief executive, Tobacco Advisory Council, 75; Miss Marjorie Yates, actress, 55.

TOMORROW: Sir Patrick Brown, Permanent Secretary, Department of Transport, 58; Miss Julie Christie, actress, 56; Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Dalton, former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, 65;

Mr Bradford Dillman, actor, 66; Sir John Gielgud, actor, 92; Mr Gerry Gillman, former trade union leader, 69; Mr Ivor Guest, ballet writer, 76; Lord Hastings, farmer and former government minister, 74; Miss Valerie Hobson (Mrs John Profumo), former actress, 78; The Most Rev Dr Denis Hopy, Archbishop of York, 56; Mr Paddy Hopkirk, racing rally driver, 63; Mr Julian Lloyd Webber, cellist, 45; Miss Loretta Lynn, country singer, 61; Mr Michael MacLagan, former Richmond Herald of Arms, 62; Col Sir Robert Mace, former Lord-Lieutenant of Orkney, 81; The Right Rev Michael Marshall, Archbishop of Canterbury, 60; Baroness Masham of Ilton, President, Spinal Injuries Association, 61; Mr Patrick Ransmay, former Controller, BBC Scotland, 78; The Right Rev Leslie Rees, Assistant Bishop, Winchester, 77; Professor John Roberts, former Warden, Merton College, Oxford, 68; The Ven Raymond Roberts, former Chaplain of the Fleet, 61; Mr David Sklpper, Director, Westminster Centre for Education, 65; Mr Rod Steiger, actor, 71; Miss Elizabeth Symons, trade union leader, 45; Sir Peter Thompson, life president, NCF, 68; Mr George Walker, former chairman and chief executive, Brent Walker, 67; Baroness Warlock, former Mistress of Girton College, Cambridge, 72.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Births: Thomas Jefferson, third US President, 1743; Frank Winfield Woolworth, chain-store pioneer, 1852. Deaths: Jean de La Fontaine, poet and writer of fables, 1695; James Buchanan Brady ("Diamond Jim"), financier, 1917. On this day: the Royal Military Academy was established at Woolwich, 1741; The *Mexikal* by George Frederick Handel, was first performed, Dublin 1742. Today is Maundy Thursday and the Feast Day of Saints Agathonic,

Carpus, and Pappus. St Guincho. St Hermenegild. St Martin I, pope and St Martinus or Mars. Today is the beginning of the Sikh New Year.

TOMORROW: Births: Arnold Joseph Toynbee, historian, 1889; François Duvalier, Haitian dictator ("Papa Doc"), 1907. Deaths: Thomas Orway, playwright, 1685; George Frederick Handel, composer, violinist and organist, 1759; Simone de Beauvoir, writer, 1906; Leslie Charteris, novelist and creator of "The Saint", 1993. On this day: Abraham Lincoln, 16th US President, was shot by the assassin John Wilkes Booth, 1865; the first quinquagesima in Scotland were born, to Mrs Linda Boswell, of Ardmole, West Lothian, 1972. Today is Easter Day in the Greek Orthodox Church and the Feast Day of Saints Antony, John and Eustace, St Ardalion, St Benet, St Bernard of Trion or Abbeville, St Caradoc, St John of Vilna, St Lambert of Lyons, Saints Ithorinus, Valerius and Maximus and The Martyrs of Lithuania.

Lectures

TODAY: Victoria and Albert Museum: Emma Taylor, "Fashionable Dress and Accessories 1620 to 1740", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Cézanne and the Human Figure", 1pm. David Cohen, "Roger Fry's Cézanne", 2.30pm. British Museum: Rosamund Lawrence, "The Painted Churches of Cyprus", 1.15pm. National Portrait Gallery: Valerie Holman, "Style and Technique in 20th-century Portraiture", 3pm.

TOMORROW: Tate Gallery: John Roberts, "Bill Woodrow's New Work", 2.30pm. National Portrait Gallery: Wendy Nelson-Cave, "Theatrical Portraits from William Shakespeare to Sarah Siddons", 3pm.

Faith in a controlled environment

faith & reason

Paul Handley, Editor of the *Church Times* and an Easter 'blue-domer', sets out to answer the question of an 11-year-old: "If God is everywhere, why do we go to church?"

In one of her letters, Rose Macaulay, novelist and High Church dame of the mid-20th century, admits to being a "blue-domer". It is a self-conscious, falsely apologetic phrase to describe somebody who slices off mains or evensong and worships, instead, under the blue dome of heaven. Apologies to any New Agers, but respectable Anglican ladies were out there first.

I have traced the phrase as far back as Shelley, who wrote:

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the murmuring of the sky...
...the winds and sunbeams with their complex gleams

Build up the blue dome of air.

Easter Sunday morning is the one occasion of the year when my family and I become blue-domers, getting up before dawn to watch the sun slip above the horizon on the east coast of England. This time, of course, we had to make do with being grey-domers, since nothing was going to penetrate the mist and cloud. We drew a sun in the sand, played hide-and-seek among the beach huts, and walked back home to eat Easter eggs.

Further up the beach, a "sunrise service" was just beginning, with a couple of songs, a reading and a sermonette. It was a typical case of Anglicans seeking compromise when no compromise is possible: you can't let people stay in bed till 7 o'clock and then have a sunrise service. The unruly sun rose at 6.25 and that was that.

Christian services, with only a very few, half-baked exceptions, are held indoors. This is a serious point. The entire evangelistic effort of the Church is devoted to luring new people into its buildings. Out of doors, worshippers feel puny and exposed. Palm Sunday processions, the weekend before Easter, always generate great anxiety: "What if we're seen?"

It is an odd fear for Christians to have, given that they follow a religion born under the blue dome of the Palestinian sky. Although Jesus attended the temple, religiously one presumes, most of the Gospel accounts place him outside, in the hills, in the wilderness, by the beach. He takes a multitude of his followers so far away from shops and houses that they have to be fed by miraculous loaves and fishes. He climbs on a boat when the crowd on the beach becomes too large. When he goes into a house, followers break open the roof in order to lower a sick man down on a stretcher.

The Church, for some reason, takes as its starting-point the scene in the upper room, where Jesus gathered his disciples in private, just before he went to his death.

An upper-room sort of faith celebrates the sacred mysteries in semi-secret, drawing the faithful together by emphasising the hostility of the world and the people outside the walls. The only elements allowed to be present are the consecrated ones of bread and wine.

It is a controlled environment, and this is the key. A flock which is hemmed in, surrounded by walls and covered by a roof, is bound to be more attentive to its shepherd. A crowd outside always has people on its edge, distracted by the birds in a hedge, the curl of the waves, a passing car. More troublesome than that, a crowd outside doesn't often want to be a crowd. Things are fine if there is a charismatic speaker holding the gathering together; in general, though, people just drift apart. The outdoors is not a place for standing about, it is a place for doing things.

This was presumably what was in the mind of my 11-year-old son when he said a few days ago, "Well, if God is everywhere, why do we go to church?" This, as other parents will recognise, is argument number 12 in the *Child's Manual for Avoiding Church*. (There are hundreds more.) He just wanted to go and play football on the common. I, in my turn, employed parent's response number one (there is only one): "Because I say so."

I suppose the thing about blue-doming is that it is a bit of a joke. You don't contemplate nature – the fothington-tomas "hullo clouds bullo sky" school of spirituality – with any degree of concentration. The vastness of God is not something you can hold in your mind for long. It really is a case of a short scrawl in the sand and then on with the hide-and-seek. The object is simply to recall that the earth is the Lord's and all that therein is.

The other object is to enjoy yourself. You see why the churches are so uncomfortable with the idea.

April 13 1996

unit trusts

UK GROWTH & INCOME

Unit Trust	Assets	Units	Price	Yield	1 Year	3 Year
ABN Growth	1,000	100	10.00	5.00%	10.00%	10.00%
ABN Income	1,000	100	10.00	5.00%	10.00%	10.00%
ABN Growth & Income	1,000	100	10.00	5.00%	10.00%	10.00%
ABN Growth & Income	1,000	100	10.00	5.00%	10.00%	10.00%
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UK EQUITY & BOND

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Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1513	7.5	10.5	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Canada	2108	11.3	13.3	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Germany	2275	35.48	37.14	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
France	7744	140.16	143.40	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Italy	2273	75.90	77.14	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Japan	2434	75.70	77.14	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
ECU	1253	11.1	11.4	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Belgium	4654	12.9	13.4	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Australia	8708	68.45	70.45	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Netherlands	2536	63.54	65.15	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Ireland	3391	9.5	9.8	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Norway	8822	16.64	17.23	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Spain	3834	25.35	26.49	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Sweden	1045	9.5	9.8	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Switzerland	1945	8.80	9.15	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Austria	1924	20.1	20.45	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Hong Kong	1657	10.1	10.4	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Malaysia	35043	0.1	0.1	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
New Zealand	1500	0.57	0.58	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
Singapore	5580	0.0	0.0	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00
London	2102	0.0	0.0	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.6550	1000	1.00	1.00

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Spot	Dollar	Country	Spot	Dollar
Argentina	1204	0.0002	Nigeria	0.0002	0.0002
Brazil	1500	0.0002	Pakistan	0.0002	0.0002
China	10000	0.0002	Philippines	0.0002	0.0002
India	10000	0.0002	Portugal	0.0002	0.0002
Indonesia	10000	0.0002	Russia	0.0002	0.0002
South Africa	10000	0.0002	South Africa	0.0002	0.0002
Taiwan	10000	0.0002	South Africa	0.0002	0.0002
Thailand	10000	0.0002	South Africa	0.0002	0.0002
UK	10000	0.0002	South Africa	0.0002	0.0002

Tourist Rates

Country	1 Day	7 Days	14 Days	21 Days	28 Days	35 Days	42 Days	49 Days	56 Days	63 Days	70 Days	77 Days	84 Days	91 Days	98 Days	105 Days	112 Days	119 Days	126 Days	133 Days	140 Days	147 Days	154 Days	161 Days	168 Days	175 Days	182 Days	189 Days	196 Days	203 Days	210 Days	217 Days	224 Days	231 Days	238 Days	245 Days	252 Days	259 Days	266 Days	273 Days	280 Days	287 Days	294 Days	301 Days	308 Days	315 Days	322 Days	329 Days	336 Days	343 Days	350 Days	357 Days	364 Days	371 Days	378 Days	385 Days	392 Days	399 Days	406 Days	413 Days	420 Days	427 Days	434 Days	441 Days	448 Days	455 Days	462 Days	469 Days	476 Days	483 Days	490 Days	497 Days	504 Days	511 Days	518 Days	525 Days	532 Days	539 Days	546 Days	553 Days	560 Days	567 Days	574 Days	581 Days	588 Days	595 Days	602 Days	609 Days	616 Days	623 Days	630 Days	637 Days	644 Days	651 Days	658 Days	665 Days	672 Days	679 Days	686 Days	693 Days	700 Days	707 Days	714 Days	721 Days	728 Days	735 Days	742 Days	749 Days	756 Days	763 Days	770 Days	777 Days	784 Days	791 Days	798 Days	805 Days	812 Days	819 Days	826 Days	833 Days	840 Days	847 Days	854 Days	861 Days	868 Days	875 Days	882 Days	889 Days	896 Days	903 Days	910 Days	917 Days	924 Days	931 Days	938 Days	945 Days	952 Days	959 Days	966 Days	973 Days	980 Days	987 Days	994 Days	1001 Days	1008 Days	1015 Days	1022 Days	1029 Days	1036 Days	1043 Days	1050 Days	1057 Days	1064 Days	1071 Days	1078 Days	1085 Days	1092 Days	1099 Days	1106 Days	1113 Days	1120 Days	1127 Days	1134 Days	1141 Days	1148 Days	1155 Days	1162 Days	1169 Days	1176 Days	1183 Days	1190 Days	1197 Days	1204 Days	1211 Days	1218 Days	1225 Days	1232 Days	1239 Days	1246 Days	1253 Days	1260 Days	1267 Days	1274 Days	1281 Days	1288 Days	1295 Days	1302 Days	1309 Days	1316 Days	1323 Days	1330 Days	1337 Days	1344 Days	1351 Days	1358 Days	1365 Days	1372 Days	1379 Days	1386 Days	1393 Days	1400 Days	1407 Days	1414 Days	1421 Days	1428 Days	1435 Days	1442 Days	1449 Days	1456 Days	1463 Days	1470 Days	1477 Days	1484 Days	1491 Days	1498 Days	1505 Days	1512 Days	1519 Days	1526 Days
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DTI probes leak of go-ahead for £4bn power bids

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

The Department of Trade and Industry yesterday launched an inquiry into the leaking of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report recommending that electricity company takeovers worth more than £4bn be allowed to proceed.

The Stock Exchange is believed to have contacted both the DTI and the MMC to ascertain who has had access to information from the report on National Power's proposed takeover of Southern Electric and that of PowerGen for Midlands Electricity.

The Exchange, which declined to comment, is also expected to voice its concerns to the Takeover Panel following massive surges in share prices in the electricity sector.

The leak caused acute embarrassment in Whitehall and prompted a swift attack by the Labour Party. The MMC document, which appears to give the go-ahead to both takeovers with only minor conditions attached, was submitted two

weeks ago to Ian Lang, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry - due back on Monday after a trade mission to Japan.

Mr Lang, who is expected to accept the MMC's advice, was not planning to publish the report for at least another week.

John Battle, shadow energy minister, said the event "throws into question the integrity of the relationship between the Secretary of State and the MMC".

He added: "The contents are so market price-sensitive that energy companies' shares are changing hands before the Secretary of State makes a decision on the findings of the report. This is an incredibly dangerous precedent that casts competition policy aside."

The bids by National Power and PowerGen are controversial as they would in effect recreate the vertically integrated structure of the sector which was dismantled before the industry was privatised.

However, Mr Lang had already set a precedent last year by clearing the takeover of Manweb, an electricity distribution and supply company in the North-west, by Scottish Power.

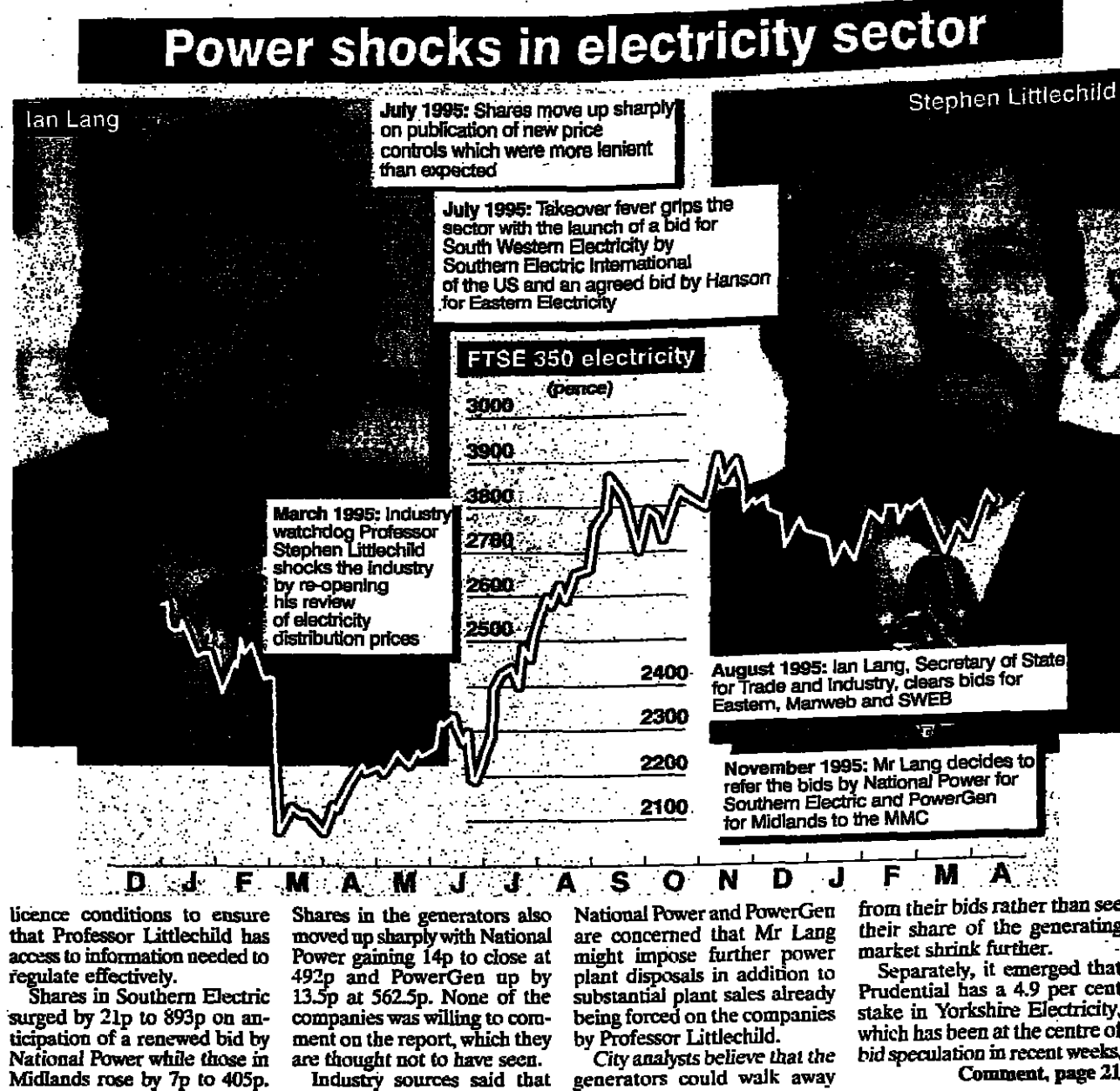
The MMC recommendation to clear the National Power and PowerGen bids will also be seen as a blow to the regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild, who is against vertical integration. A spokeswoman for the watchdog said that they could not comment on an unpublished report.

The DTI said: "The position remains that no decision has been taken." The Secretary of State must accept an unequivocal MMC approval for a merger. But the DTI said that he could block it if the Commission suggested that a merger might in some way be against the public interest. Mr Lang might also decide to give the proposed merger the go-ahead but to impose conditions of his own.

The MMC is thought to have put forward conditions for the bids including the disposal of any generating plants owned by Southern and Midlands.

National Power and PowerGen are also expected to be forced to ring-fence contracts between the companies they are buying and other generators.

A further constraint would be changes to the companies'



Standard Life man looking at float options

NIC CICUTTI

Standard Life, the largest mutual insurer in Europe, confirmed yesterday that it had asked one of its top executives, John Thomson, to examine the possible implications of demutualising in a floatation. The City thinks would be worth £5bn.

It also admitted that it has been considering whether to take over a UK building society to broaden its business in the mortgage market.

The insurer has issued a CV for Mr Thomson stating that it had asked one of its top executives, John Thomson, to examine the possible implications of demutualising in a floatation. The City thinks would be worth £5bn.

But the company strongly denied it had any plans to demutualise, and added that no decision had yet been reached on whether to carry the idea of a building society takeover forward.

Jim Stretton, chief executive of Standard Life's UK operation yesterday, said: "Continuing speculation that [we] will demutualise forces us to restate that we have no plans to [do so]. It would not be in our policyholders' best interests."

"Mutuals have consistently produced better returns for their policyholders than proprietary companies in the past and Standard Life's record has been second to none."

Mr Stretton's comments were part of a careful damage limitation exercise aimed at snuffing out a potential demutualisation fever among its 3 million-plus policyholders.

Mr Stretton added that Standard Life did not need to seek outside funds to finance any of its future ventures. "We are extremely strong financially, being one of only a handful of life companies in the world with a Triple A rating from both Standard & Poor and Moody's." It comes as virtually every top-10 building society has announced plans to abandon its mutual status, giving more than 15 million savers and borrowers members free shares worth an average of £1,000 each.

Insurance analysts believe the insurance sector is set for a radical shake-out in the next five years, with up to half the 100-plus mutual insurers now in operation merging or being taken over by rivals.

Norwich Union, the second-largest UK mutual insurer, announced in October that it was examining the option of a £1.7bn stock market floatation, claiming that demutualisation would give it the funds needed to expand the range of services it offers. A decision by NU is expected by the end of this year.

Deutsche Telekom move on C&W confuses City

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

The possible £35bn merger between BT and Cable & Wireless was thrown into confusion yesterday following reports that Deutsche Telekom, Germany's state telecommunications company, has made unofficial contact with C&W.

The German group moved to quash speculation that it plans to bid, saying that it is looking at a variety of ways of expanding its European interests.

Deutsche Telekom's finance director, Joachim Kroeske, said that, while he did not rule out a bid for C&W, "I do not think a takeover of C&W by Telekom is necessarily the one that will happen. There are other possibilities."

His comments fuelled speculation that Deutsche is seriously considering the acquisition of Mercury Communications, C&W's UK arm.

Mercury is BT's big rival in the provision of telephony service in Britain and would have to be divested if the merger goes ahead. BT is thought to view Deutsche as one of the preferred

bidders for Mercury. Other would-be suitors are said to include AT&T of the US, Italy's Stet, and a consortium of US-controlled cable companies.

City analysts believe that Deutsche has earmarked the UK as a priority but that the group would not bid alone. Deutsche has tailor-made partners in the form of France Telecom and Sprint of the US, which are already its allies in the Global One organisation.

Shares in C&W rose 9p to 535p amidst conflicting rumours over potential suitors. Neither BT nor Cable, which have confirmed they are in talks that could lead to a merger, was willing to comment.

At the same time that it is concerned about an effective takeover of C&W, which is the majority shareholder in Hongkong Telecom.

Without approval by the Chinese authorities, any planned merger between the UK groups would be still-born, as Hongkong Telecom is a key motive in BT's desire to acquire the rival group.

Yang Xianzu, China's vice-minister for post and telecommunications, told delegates at a Hong Kong conference that he was concerned about the issue but refused to elaborate. He later said: "We do not have much information about the matter on hand."

Under present discussions between the companies, the potential merger would take the form of a reverse takeover by C&W. Talks are being conducted largely by advisers, with NM Rothschild acting for BT and Goldman Sachs for C&W.

City sources say that the move has the tacit blessing of the UK Government. However, Ian Lang, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, recently took the unusual step of issuing a statement denying that any approval in principle had been given.

The merger, which could happen within weeks, would also be scrutinised by the industry regulator, Ofcom. Don Cruickshank, director general, has said he would be concerned to see Mercury taken over by a over by a strong management committed to competition.

Anglo-American wins right to buy Bock's £300m Lonrho stake

MICHAEL HARRISON

The South African mining giant Anglo-American yesterday moved a step closer to taking control of Lonrho's mining interests after being granted the right to buy chief executive Dieter Bock's £300m stake in the group.

This would lift Anglo's holding in Lonrho to just under 30 per cent and provide the springboard for it to take charge of the group's platinum, gold and coal interests when the demerger of Lonrho's mining interests from its trading and hotels business takes place this summer. Anglo, which together with its associates now owns 10 per cent of Lonrho, already had the option to buy Mr Bock's 18.4 per cent stake if he chose to sell.

Under the put and call deal agreed yesterday, Anglo has the right to buy Mr Bock's 143.5 million shares at 200p while he can force a sale at 180p.

The agreement is due to be exercised at the point of demerger. Anglo will buy Mr Bock's stake in the mining operations and tender its stake in

the non-mining businesses in the subsequent floatation.

Mr Bock will use the proceeds from Anglo to acquire a 25 per cent stake in the quoted non-mining company which will own Lonrho's trading and hotel operations and will inherit the bulk of Lonrho's £430m debt. Oliver Baring of SBC Warburg, which brokered the deal on behalf of Anglo, said: "I don't think Anglo is in bid mode but this puts them in a strong position where they can do all sorts of things."

A full takeover of Lonrho's mining operations could cause problems with competition authorities because it would increase Anglo's dominance of the platinum market, where it is the world's biggest producer.

But what interests Anglo more is Lonrho's 43 per cent shareholding in the Ghana-based gold producer Ashanti and its Duiker coal mining interests.

Announcing the agreement yesterday, Lonrho said it had decided that a closer partnership was necessary with Anglo to facilitate the separation of its mining and non-mining businesses.

Anglo meanwhile said it would co-operate with Lonrho to develop its gold and coal interests in Africa. A senior Anglo technical director has also been appointed to the Lonrho board.

"This allows people to get to know each other... to go forward together in the demerger," Anglo spokesman Michael Spicer said.

The put and call arrangement will remain in place until 13 September, 1997. It values Mr Bock's stake at between £260m and £315m compared with a value at last night's 207.5p closing price of £297m.



Put and call: Acquiring Dieter Bock's stake in Lonrho would lift Anglo-American's holding to about 30 per cent



Frightening the opposition: One of the games from Sega which has set its sights on Sony's market lead

Sega extends price war with Sony

NIGEL COPE

Sega is hoping to close the gap on its arch-rival Sony in the cut-throat computer games market by continuing a price-cutting war it claims has seen sales of its Sega Saturn consoles double in the last few weeks.

Sega cut the price of the Saturn by £50 to £249 at the beginning of this month, saying the promotion would last three weeks. However, the success of the campaign is tempting the company to continue the discount for as long as it takes to wrest the initiative from Sony's PlayStation, which is continuing to outsell the Saturn, according to new figures released yesterday. Sega declined to confirm the decision yesterday.

The PlayStation is priced at £295 and Sony says it has no

plans to cut the price. "It is not necessary, given the current level of demand." However, Sony may be forced to reduce its prices if it finds that Sega is clawing back market share.

Another possibility is that it will choose to give away free games with the consoles rather than cut the price. Both companies were coy on new initiatives but are expected to announce plans at the European Computer Trade show which starts at London's Olympia on Sunday. The if-for-a-stippling is part of an increasingly bitter battle that has seen both companies engage in a marketing frenzy.

The stakes are huge in the computer games market, which is worth around £2bn a year world-wide. Figures released yesterday by Sony claim that its

PlayStation console has sold more than 3.7 million units worldwide compared with Sega Saturn's figure of 3.5m.

European sales have topped 700,000 since its launch in September last year including 200,000 in the UK. Sony claims worldwide revenues for the PlayStation have passed £2bn and that it is a more successful launch than the Sony Walkman.

Sony had already claimed victory in the Christmas battle when it said it had sold 35,000 units in December against Saturn's 25,000. Sega had been spending less on promoting its new launch while Sony had earmarked £20m to push the PlayStation. Both companies tend to dispute each other's figures as a matter of course.

The fierce battle for the hearts and pocket money of the

nation's youth is threatening to leave Nintendo far behind.

The company insists its long-delayed Nintendo 64 console, which operates on 64-bit technology, will be launched in the late autumn, denying suggestions that its debut has been put back until next year. A price point has yet to be decided.

Nintendo has enjoyed much success with its Gameboy machine but instead of joining Sega and Sony with new 32-bit machines which are more powerful, it has chosen to wait and try to leapfrog rivals with its 64-bit machine.

Sega is set to announce that it has first publication rights to Virgin's Heart of Darkness, an interactive cartoon-based game. Sony will not have rights to publish the game on its PlayStation unit next year.

Inflation fears recede in US

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Further evidence of a revival in the American economy, with no sign yet of higher inflation, helped US financial markets bounce back yesterday.

New figures showed retail sales barely rose in March but this was entirely because of huge upward revisions to February's sales figures.

Sales grew 0.1 per cent last month after climbing 1.9 per cent in February - the biggest jump for nearly three years. Their average annualised growth rate during the first three months of this year has been well over 8 per cent.

Yet headline consumer price inflation dipped, falling to 2.8 per cent from 2.9 per cent in February despite big increases in food and energy prices. The price level rose 0.4 per cent, and the "core" index, excluding food and energy, increased 0.3 per cent.

March's jump in food prices was the highest for more than a year. Bad weather has driven up grain and vegetable prices. A Florida freeze hit tomatoes, storms affected lettuce crops in the South West and lack of rain in the Mid-West means stocks of corn and wheat have fallen perilously low.

Similarly, the harsh winter has depleted oil stocks and sent prices to their highest level since the gulf war.

The general level of food prices paid by consumers increased 0.6 per cent during March, with fresh vegetables up

a dramatic 10 per cent during the month. Energy costs climbed 1.4 per cent.

"People have taken a real view of these increases on the basis that they will be short-lived," said Mark Cliffe, an economist at securities firm HSBC Markets.

A Labor Department economist, Patrick Jackson, said: "I don't think it will get out of hand."

There were declines in some other prices, notably a 1.9 per cent drop in airline fares.

The market reaction to the buoyant retail sales was more surprising in the light of Wall Street's recent dives on the slightest concern about future inflationary pressure.

A drop in the University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index between March and April contributed to yesterday's calm. The index fell to 90.8 from 93.7 last month.

Analysts said fears that the Federal Reserve would decide to raise key interest rates were receding. "The Fed would need more evidence of faster growth and an uptick in inflation before they act. My guess is that it will want to do nothing this year," said Brian Fabbri, an economist at Paribas Capital Markets on Wall Street.

By mid-afternoon, the Dow Jones index was up 40.46 to 5,527.53, despite a sharp dip in one of the biggest stocks, IBM. The benchmark 30-year Treasury bond had gained a third of a point, taking its yield down to 6.84 per cent from 6.92 per cent.

STOCK MARKETS									
FT-SE 100									
3750	3760	3770	3780	3790	3800	3810	3820	3830	3840
3750	3760	3770	3780	3790	3800	3810	3820	3830	3840
3750	3760	3770	3780	3790	3800	3810	3820	3830	3840
3750	3760	3770	3780	3790	3800	3810	3820	3830	3840
3750	3760	3770	3780	3790	3800	3810	3820	3830	3840
3750	3760	3770	3780	3790	3800	3810	3820	3830	3840
3750	3760	3770	3780	3790	3800	3810	3820	3830	3840
3750	3760	3770	3780	3790	3800	3810	3820	3830	3840
3750	3760	3770	3780	3790	3800	3810	3820	3830	3840

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling									
1M	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
3M	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
6M	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
1Y	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
2Y	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
3Y	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
4Y	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5Y	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
10Y	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50

CURRENCIES									
E/£									
1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50

OTHER INDICATORS									
Index									
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

July 1995

Second chance to rethink the meaning of power

COMMENT

The two generators will not be allowed to abuse their market positions in the south and east of the country and they would be crazy to do so.

The fact that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission has approved the takeovers of Southern Electric and Midlands Electricity by National Power and PowerGen is no surprise. That much was pretty well known before yesterday. The fact that it has chosen to wave the deals through with only very limited conditions is more of a surprise.

But neither this nor the synthetic rage of Labour, should deter the Trade Secretary Ian Lang from doing the correct thing and going along with the advice of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The MMC concluded that whilst the mergers might operate against the public interest in some respects these were not sufficiently serious to warrant prohibition and could in any case be overcome with binding undertakings.

The one dissenting voice on the MMC panel was that of Patricia Hodgson, the BBC's director of policy and planning, who submitted a minority report arguing that if the mergers were allowed it would mean higher prices and less competition.

This is rich coming from an employee of an organisation that does not have to compete for its income and which also enjoys what in MMC parlance would be called a "scale monopoly" in broadcasting.

But let us pass over that and consider the facts. The principal objection to the two mergers is that they would result in an unacceptable degree of vertical integration,

creating two large groups that generate, distribute and supply electricity – the structure that existed before the industry was broken up on privatisation in 1990.

But the Government conceded the principle of vertical integration when it allowed the takeover of Manweb by Scottish Power to go ahead.

The boundaries have been further blurred by the prospect of Eastern Electricity, which is owned by Hanson, taking over power stations from National Power and PowerGen, which would make it the fourth-biggest generator in the country.

It has also been argued that allowing the deals would give National Power and PowerGen captive regional markets for their electricity, driving choice down and prices up, and increase their ability to rig prices in the electricity pool, the wholesale market for England and Wales.

But the two generators will not be allowed to abuse their market positions in the south and east of the country by the regulator of the industry, Professor Stephen Littlechild, and they would be crazy to do so since we are now less than two years away from the point when the country's 22 million domestic consumers will be able to dispense with their local supplier and shop around.

The undue influence they could exert in the pool will need careful watching but this is steadily being eroded by the arrival of competitors offering electricity from "mid-

merit" generating plants – those power stations which generally set the overall pool price.

National Power and PowerGen have almost certainly overstated the efficiency gains they can make from combining generation with distribution and supply and in any event what cost savings they could squeeze out would go to shareholders first and customers second.

But the overriding issue which Mr Lang has to address is what kind of structure he wants for the electricity industry as the domestic market prepares for liberalisation – a dozen regional electricity companies happy to sit on their local monopolies, or a smaller group of well-capitalised integrated players who will bring more competition into electricity supply.

Vertical integration is not always the friend of the consumer but the manner in which the electricity industry was broken up in 1990 has not been an unalloyed success. This time around the Government has the chance to rectify that while putting in place the safeguards that will ensure the customer benefits.

A chance Airbus must not squander

It is hard not to smile at the suggestion that McDonnell Douglas is planning a 400-seater jet to compete with the Boeing

747. Surely this can't be the same company that was obliged to take out newspaper advertisements last year reassuring the world that it was not about to exit from civil aircraft production.

Yes it can, and no it does not end there for the newly-appointed president of the Douglas Aircraft Corporation, Michael Sears, promises that once its 400-seater is in the air it will turn its attention to building a super jumbo.

Now the scent of aviation fuel in the nostrils can do strange things to the sanest of executives so perhaps we should not dismiss these ideas out of hand.

But it is about as hard to conceive of McDonnell Douglas finding the \$15bn it would take to build a super jumbo as it is to imagine it merging with Boeing – another of the ideas that did the rounds last year.

What is not in dispute, however, is that McDonnell Douglas, number three in the world's jet building league, has turned the corner from basket case to serious contender.

That makes it all the more imperative that the latest proposal to overhaul Airbus Industrie and turn it into a public limited company is not allowed to run out of steam.

The European aircraft consortium has made large strides in the last five years much to the benefit of British Aerospace and its three other industrial partners in France, Germany and Spain.

Indeed Airbus, once the whipping boy for everything that went wrong in BAE's commercial aircraft division, is now the reason that it is still in the air.

But the uniquely French way that Airbus is structured as a Groupement d'Interets Economiques militates against efficiency and means that production is carved up, not according to who is most competitive but what shareholdings each partner has.

BAe began sub-contracting out its work share years ago and now at last the other partners are moving in its direction. The Germans have warned they will not fund new Airbus models unless it reconstitutes itself. More importantly, the French, for long the main stumbling block to change, have agreed that Airbus needs to change shape even if it means Aerospace losing work-share.

Edzard Reuter, the former Daimler-Benz chairman, is due to report to the Airbus supervisory board in May on what structure it should adopt.

We have been here before. Six years ago Lord Sterling produced a "wise men's" report for the four government's recommending a complete overhaul of Airbus. Nothing happened.

On this occasion, however, there is consensus for the first time among the partners about what needs to be done. It is essential that the chance for change is not squandered.

Clark shoes set to miss float deadline

NIGEL COPE

C&J Clark, the privately owned shoe company, is facing a showdown with the group's family shareholders after admitting that it may miss the deadline which commits the company to a stock market listing by 1998.

Unveiling a 26 per cent increase in profits to £25m yesterday, Clark's chairman Roger Pedder conceded a delay was possible though the commitment remained unchanged. "We said the company had to be in the right shape and the market had to be right. There is no change to that aim, we are just undecided on the actual date. It might take a little longer. The market is tough out there."

If Clark's does fail to meet the deadline it would need special approval from the family shareholders who still own 70 per cent of the shares. The family agreed to reject a £184m takeover bid from Berisford three years ago on condition that the company went public within five years.

The agreement was only

reached after family in-fighting that culminated in an emergency meeting at the group's headquarters in Street, Somerset.

Mr Pedder has since established a shareholder council and hopes to secure any extension to the float deadline without family rows or a formal meeting. "I think it would now be worked out within the shareholder body," Mr Pedder said.

Clark's has been struggling to re-structure itself in the face of a difficult and over-supplied UK footwear market.

The company has been cutting costs under its new chief executive, Tim Parker, who was recruited from Kenwood earlier this year. Further cuts are likely with some job losses expected. No store closures are planned. A trial children's store format will start in May and a new international store will be tested in the United States later this year.

Clark's pre-tax profits increased by 26 per cent to £24.8m last year on sales up 5 per cent to £721m. Profits were boosted by income from prop-

erty disposal which will not recur.

Underlying profits from the core shoe operations were down sharply due to a tough market and serious disruption within UK manufacturing. US profits collapsed from £3.6m in 1994 to just £690,000 last year.

There have been a number of senior management changes. Malcolm Cotton, the former managing director who left last year, received £460,000 compensation for loss of office as well as a fee for consultancy work undertaken during 1995.

Two other directors, John Clothier and Patrick Farmer made a combined total of £700,000 from the exercise of share options before leaving the company. These issues are likely to increase tension with the family shareholders.

On current trading, Mr Pedder said the new year had started with sales up by 2.1 per cent on the same period in 1995. But some factories are short of work, which could mean penalties for producing below capacity.



Showdown: Roger Pedder, chairman, says the commitment to a listing is unchanged

Cable will put schools on-line 'before digital'

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Plans by cable operators to wire up every school in Britain are already well advanced, an industry spokesman said yesterday, while a plan by Rupert Murdoch to supply digital satellite dishes for use by institutions could take years to develop.

"We are actively deploying our links to schools and universities," Bob Frost, chief executive of the Cable Communications Association, said yesterday. "The structure is already there, while the alternatives such as digital satellite would require additional hardware and software."

Mr Frost, whose association represents Britain's cable operators, made his remarks in the wake of reports that Mr Murdoch had offered satellites for every school, in return for the Government's support over his planned introduction of digital satellite services in the UK.

"There's no question that we will have a functioning system connecting schools first," Mr Frost added. The cable industry is halfway through a £100m investment programme to roll out broadband cable services across the country.

The Government has been looking at ways of encouraging the growth of the information highway in the UK, and has been concentrating on connections to schools. The Labour Party unveiled a controversial agreement with BT last year under which the telephone operator would connect schools and other public institutions with

fibre optic lines, in return for the freedom to broadcast entertainment services over its network.

The information highway, including connections to the Internet, so-called "distance learning", and other interactive services, is a high priority at Number 10, where Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine has been taking a lead.

Mr Heseltine met Mr Murdoch over lunch six weeks ago, to discuss how Mr Murdoch's News Corporation might help develop a function "educational information highway" in the UK. Two weeks later, the Government introduced an amendment liberalising ownership restrictions on investments in domestic satellite services.

Cable and telephone lines now being installed in the UK are capable of supporting two-way communication of video, text and audio signals. Digital satellite, whereby signals are digitised and compressed, is also capable of interactivity, but there are presently no such services available in the UK.

According to satellite experts, a digital service would require new hardware in space, as well as extensive hardware and software on the ground.

Mr Murdoch's offer is believed to have been limited to the supply of satellite dishes, leaving institutions and the Government to provide the additional hardware and software required.

Mr Murdoch's BskyB is the

dominant pay-TV player in the UK. The company has said it would introduce new digital services within the next two years.

Big shareholders back £23m Newspaper Publishing cash call

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Large shareholders in Newspaper Publishing, publisher of the *Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*, yesterday backed a £23m rights issue.

Mirror Group, owner of the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Record*, and Dr Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers, have

agreed to support a rights issue by the group which will see their stakes increased to 46.4 per cent each and the Spanish group Promotora de Informaciones (Prisa) diluted to 6.7 per cent.

The two main shareholders will see their stakes raised from around 43 per cent each now. Prisa, publishers of *La Republica*, which currently holds just

under 9 per cent of Newspaper Publishing, has indicated that it will not take up its rights.

Part of the new equity will replace £14m of existing loans made to Newspaper Publishing by Mirror Group and Independent Newspapers, and the other £9m is new money, to be invested in the group's ongoing businesses.

They are taking up their rights on a one-for-one basis at 31p a share. The rights issue will not be underwritten.

Newspaper Publishing cut its losses to £19.5m in the year to December from £50.8m in the previous 15-month period. Liam Healy, the group's chairman and chief executive of Independent Newspapers, said

cost reductions, other than newspaper, and improving revenues had significantly reduced the rate of losses.

"Since the refinancing of the company in May-June 1995, the quality newspaper market in the UK has remained very competitive. However, there has been some relaxation of the aggressive cover pricing policies

seen last year which has been accompanied by an improvement in the company's circulation revenues."

Cover price increases in July and January "do not appear to have significantly affected the circulation of the *Independent*", he said. Year-on-year circulation figures for January remained largely unchanged.

Prospect the oil sector for riches

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

The surging price of oil to post-gulf war peaks this week has dragged many shares in the exploration and production sector to 52-week highs. The correlation between the two is usually close, but, as our graph shows, even after a good run this year, the explorers have not benefited to the extent previous experience would suggest they should.

Two factors help explain the apparent caution surrounding the sector. Perhaps most important is the outlook for the oil price itself. Its recent surprising strength has been caused by a squeeze on world-wide stocks of oil caused by higher-than-expected demand as a result of severe winter weather in the Northern Hemisphere and a shortfall in forecast production from countries outside the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries cartel.

That has resulted in the oil price soaring by more than a quarter since the start of the year, coming within sight of \$24 a barrel on Thursday, a price not seen for more than five years.

But analysts remain steadfastly bearish about the prospects for the price for the rest of 1996. The biggest shadow darkening prospects is the return to the international oil market of Iraq, still locked out by the US and Britain for its part in the gulf war. If current talks with the UN prove successful, there could be a limited return of Iraqi supplies, leading eventually to its full restoration to the market.

Even without that threat, however, the consensus view is that the threat of oil supply exceeding production this year is likely to weigh on the price in the second half of 1996. A bounce-back in non-Opec production is expected to match the modest increase in world demand forecast for this year. With Opec production also expected to rise, even without Iraq, the outlook is for a substantial surplus developing during the course of 1996.

The other problem for investors in the exploration sector is that, as our table shows, share prices have nearly all caught up with net asset values. After a disappointing five years, the past 12 months or so have been marked by new signs of life in the sector.

Bid activity lit up share prices last year and observers believe the cycle has not ended. Bigish foreign groups such as Statoil and Talisman, which snapped up Aran and Goal, showed there is a continuing interest in acquiring UK acreage. And with the majors generating plenty of cash, there is no shortage of resources to back acquisitions. But even on fundamental grounds, the explorers have been increasing their own attractions. Lasso

has drastically cut its operating costs over the past few years and the full potential of its big Algerian find is not included in Kleinwort's net asset figures.

The Hassi Berkine fields could eventually contain double the 1.5 billion reserves indicated. Even if such hopes prove optimistic, the prospects of a bid should underpin the share price. Its gas interests in Algeria and Indonesia could be highly attractive to a well-capitalised group like Shell. One of the world's leading corporate natural gas producers, Shell is underrepresented in Algeria, one of the world's leading gas producing nations. The wild card is the potential for civil unrest there.

Hardy Oil & Gas is another player attracting interest now that John Wal-

sley, the respected former finance director of Enterprise Oil, has taken the reins. The shares have responded to efforts by the new team to give more focus to the rather sprawling group spun out of Trafalgar House. But there could be more to come if current prospects live up to expectations.

The results of a third appraisal well on the potentially big Bayu discovery in the Timor Sea are expected within the next few days. Estimates suggest the gas and condensate field could contain 1 billion barrels of oil equivalent.

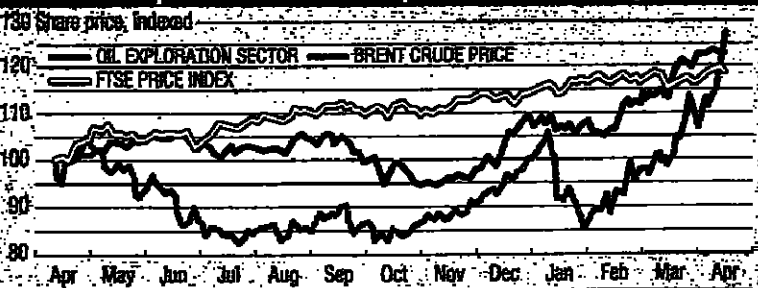
Another group analysts are warning to is Cairn Energy, whose shares soared earlier this year on hopes for an interesting gas discovery in Bangladesh. The preliminary results announcement on Thursday is expected to bring news of an appraisal well being completed on the Sangu field. If that brings further evidence of a substantial gas find, there could be further significant upside potential in the shares. Apart from the massive latent market of 110 million people in Bangladesh, there is also the prospect of tapping into the nearby Indian market. Such considerations could attract the attention of predators like Occidental or British Gas, keen to establish a presence there.

More speculatively, shares in British Borneo Petroleum have leapt this year, fired by optimism surrounding its deal to develop Shell's Morpeth field in the Gulf of Mexico.

Much of this is "blue sky" potential, however, as the SeaStar tension leg production platform to be used is untried as yet and the field would be marginal using traditional methods.

So after the recent rerating, much of the exploration sector has caught up with events. Given that and the rather cloudy outlook for oil prices this year, stocks should not generally be chased higher. Even so, careful selection by investors could still reap rewards.

Oil explorers have outperformed this year



Company	Price	NAV	Premium to NAV
British Borneo	480p	380p	26%
Cairn Energy	247p	220p	12%
Clyde Petroleum	83p	54p	54%
Enterprise Oil	452p	369p	22%
Hardy Oil & Gas	240p	217p	11%
LASSMO	189p	187p	1%
Monmouth	64.5p	53p	22%
Premier	31p	24.5p	27%

Sources: Kleinwort Benson Securities

Takeover Panel raps BET

MAGNUS GRIMOND

The Takeover Panel yesterday publicly rapped BET for misleading investors in a statement rejecting the higher bid for the group announced by Rentokil on Thursday. Indicating the seriousness with which it viewed the matter, the City watchdog issued a rare public reprimand criticising BET for not making a valid comparison between its share price and the value of the new offer.

The announcement from BET on Thursday valued Rentokil's revised offer at 209.8p a share, excluding a promised dividend of 4p, and claimed that it represented an increase of just 1.1 per cent over the previous night's closing price. The Panel executive said it was "not satisfied that this was a valid comparison to have been made because an offer value ex the BET dividend was compared with a BET share price which was cum all future dividends."

BET has already forecast a final dividend of 3.7p for last year, which is deemed to be included in its share price. Had the comparison been made between Rentokil's increased offer and BET's share price prior to the announcement of the new offer the increase would have been 3.01 per cent, the Panel said. It called on BET not to make further comparisons based on the value of Rentokil's increased offer excluding the BET dividend.

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100

3766.8 +22.6

FT-SE 250

4408.0 +17.5

FT-SE 350

1897.9 +10.5

SEAG VOLUME

942.8m shares,

33,988 bargains

Gilt Index

n/a

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

share price, pence

1150

1400

1000

900

800

700

600

500

400

300

200

100

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Tory defeat concentrates market minds on takeovers

The Tory by election disaster

sent shares charging ahead.

With John Major's majority

down to one and a minority

Government looming, the

stock market took the view that

predators could be rushed into

early action.

The attitude of any Labour

government to a takeover feast

is, at best, untested. So the

need to get deals done and

dusted before any election

had, following the Staffordshire

South result, become even

more pressing.

The takeover fever was en-

couraged by what appeared to

be a leak of Whitehall's in-

tention to clear PowerGen's bid

for Midland Electricity and

National Power's offer for

Southern Electric.

PG surged 13.5p to 562.5p

and NP 14p to 492p. The tar-

gets also responded with Mid-

land 7p to 405p and

Southern 21p to 839p.

The remaining electricity

companies which still com-

mand their own destiny antici-

pated what is now regarded as

inevitable bid action.

US power groups are

favourite to strike although

continental operations lurk.

Against such a background

East Midlands jumped 34p to

658p; London 10p to 899p

and Yorkshire 15p to 898p. Even

debt laden Northern Electric

rose 21p to 679p.

Waters were also flushed

into action. Speculation the

proposed bids will be cleared

lifted South West Water 18p to

714p.

Ladbroke was back in the

frame. In brisk trading the

shares edged forward 1.5p to

183.5p with a deal with Hilton

Hotels Corporation of the US

now the market's favourite

option. Whether such an al-

liance would lead to a bid is,

however, unclear.

Cable & Wireless gained

9p to 535p as the Germans



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter

of the year

expressed interest. In off-the-

cuff comments at a Frankfurt

dinner Joachim Kroske, fi-

nance director of Deutsche

Telekom, let slip the German

group had more than a pass-

ing interest in Cable.

The Germans have been

canvassed as a potential buyer

of Cable's Mercury telephone

offshoot but this is the first time

they have let it be known that

an outright bid is a possibility.

The election result also en-

couraged suggestions of more

economic relaxations. The

Tories will, no doubt, redouble

their efforts to keep the econ-

omy moving ahead and the key

part of any election campaign

will be tax cuts, on present form

announced in the Budget, de-

livered in April. There are

also signs the feel-good factor

is seeping into the market,

prompting many consumer

shares to an enjoyable session.

Building and related shares

remained to the fore although

RMC, the best performing blue

chip with a 47p gain to 1,069p,

owed at least some of its ex-

uberance to figures, due next

week. Around £321m against

£283.3m is expected despite the

problems encountered by the

group's German interests. With

the long mooted housing re-

covery seemingly materialising

Barratt Developments, up

9p to 271p and Beazer, 12p to

201p, led housebuilders.

Kingfisher headed the retail

advance with a 19p gain to

602p; Dixons was not far be-

hind, up 13p to 485p and Next

improved 15p to 533p.

Royal Bank of Scotland

shaded 3p to 501p despite

bullish comments from

NatWest Securities. The shares

have underperformed as take-

over speculation has dimin-

ished and worries surfaced

about the performance of the

Direct Line insurance off-

shoot. NatWest point out it

downgraded for this year from

£658m to £618m. But Royal

Bank's premium to the sector,

say NatWest, is now "very

modest and, given the medium

term scope for upside sur-

prises on profits, the shares are

looking more attractive".

Matthew Clark, reflecting

the Credit Lyonnais Laing

support, gained a further 16.5p

to 761p and MFI, the furniture

stores chain, continued to bask

in a Kleinwort Benson

recommendation with a further

8p gain to 180p.

Micro Focus, the software

house, continued to attract

support, mainly American,

gaining 45p to 898p.

Lombard slipped 5.5p to

207.5p as the closer involve-

ment with Anglo American,

the South African mining giant,

was judged as reducing the

chance of a bid. RTZ, ferrying

analysts to Portugal next week,

put on 21p to 994p and the

strength of the crude oil price

continued to influence British

Petroleum, hitting 598p, up

6.5p to 598p. Shell added 15p

to 884p and Lasso 6p to 185p.

VideoLogic the chip maker

was little changed at 66p.

Charles Stanley, the stock-

broker, says the market is only

beginning to appreciate the

company's world leadership in

multimedia chips. It expects

losses to continue this year with

£4.5m likely; next year there

should be a £10m profit.

TAKING STOCK

British Biotech slipped 8p

to 2,365p as SBC Warburg

placed 1.5 million shares at

around 2,200p with an

unidentified institution. The

shares were put up for sale by

a Japanese pharmaceutical

group.

A key presentation on

Biotech's cancer drug is due

next month. The shares have

looked a little unsure this

month as some investors

have locked in their profits.

A year ago the shares were

down to 462p.

Queens Moat Houses, the

battered hotel group, contin-

ues to defy analysts. Most say

the shares are overvalued yet

they are hitting new highs,

climbing 0.5p to 25.25p, a

closing peak since last year's

restructuring, in busy trad-

ing. The suspicion lingers

that corporate activity could

be inspired by the upturn in

the hotel market.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by

20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share

price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: ex rights = Ex-dividend; ex rights = Ex rights; ex rights = Ex rights; ex rights = Ex rights.

Party Paid pm Nil Paid Shares. Source: Finance.

The Independent Index

The index shows you at a glance real-time share prices by phone from Seag. Simply dial

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the cost of the call to the nearest landline.

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CRICKET'S SELECTION ELECTION: By throwing headline-making names into the field, the counties have drawn the spotlight away from their own responsibilities in developing players, argues **Graeme Wright**

Botham or Bolus? A poll that does not matter

When it comes to elections, you have to hand it to the Americans: they make a show of it. Bands, badges and band-wagons, and that's only the Primaries. The Test and County Cricket Board goes about its elections in a much more English way — too much secrecy and too many leaks. When Ray Illingworth defeated M J K Smith in a postal ballot in March 1994, for example, no voting figures were given. Indeed, it would have come as no surprise had waiting journalists been kept outside the Grace Gate until a Vatican-style puff of smoke emerged from the cathedral of cricket.

With the forthcoming election of selectors, of course, we've already had the smoke by way of a smokescreen: a bonfire of vanities, so to speak. By putting up an unprecedented number of candidates, the counties have effectively — intentionally or unintentionally — clouded the most important issue. This is that England's cricketers have been poorly equipped (with the exception of sponsors' dogtags) to compete in international cricket. And Illingworth, the man who has understood this all along, is the man under attack by some of the counties.

"The players work hard enough running round the ground," he said when he was appointed chairman, "but not hard enough at the basics of cricket." Perhaps the chairman has been getting too close to home truths for the liking of some counties. The time for getting back to basics is not a few days before a Test match, as Illingworth should have been wise enough to know with regard to Devon Malcolm in South Africa. The right time is when the players are with their counties. Indeed, getting the basics right is the counties' responsibility, and that means employing first-class coaches who understand the mental and technical demands of the modern game, that is: not the modern county game.







Unfortunately, when you utter words like technical and technique, people go rather glassy. On a sports programme recently, the panel was advised not to get too technical lest the listeners wouldn't understand — in which case they'd do a double turn-off. Yet technique is an important part of most sports and essential in cricket.

Last May, for example, covering Surrey match for our Sunday paper, I remarked on Alec Stewart's uncertainty when playing on the front foot. Having had consecutive winters in the West Indies and Australia, he looked every inch a Test cricketer on the back foot, but worryingly vulnerable when bowlers drew him forward.

That weakness was still obvious during the winter in South Africa, where accurate, intelligent seam bowling always sought to exploit it. This was something his Surrey employers should have sorted out, but the county appeared more occupied with business off the field than on it.

In today's world, however, it is personalities and "issues" that sell sports

EIGHTSOME REEL: CONTENDERS AND PRETENDERS FOR A THANKLESS TASK

Candidate	In His Own Words	The Illy Factor
 Kim Barnett Age: 35 County: Derbyshire Specialty: Opening batsman, leg-spin bowler Nominated by: Derbyshire International experience: 4 Tests Profession: Cricket coach Comments: Full-time player Notes: Banned from Test cricket after rebel South Africa tour. Nicknames: Shippo, Barn	<p>"Forget all the trivia about pitches, how the game should be in length of time, covering etc. Let's get on with playing attractive, entertaining cricket"</p>	<p>Considerable potential for conflict. Illingworth has made it clear that he thinks full-time playing is probably incompatible with the job of a selector. At 35, Barnett is also the youngest candidate, an attribute Illy may regard as provocative.</p>
 Brian Bolus Age: 62 Counties: Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire Specialty: Opening bat, former selector Nominated by: Nottinghamshire International experience: 7 Tests Profession: Retired civil servant Comments: Some after-dinner speaking Notes: Believed to be one of two favoured by Ray Illingworth. Nicknames: TSB Bolus (the man who likes to say 'yes')	<p>Unavailable for comment</p>	<p>Significant pluses and minuses. There are only a couple of candidates Illy really wants, and Bolus, former selector, non boat-rocker, is one of them. However, being a favoured candidate may actually lessen his appeal with counties already unhappy with Illingworth's efforts.</p>
 Ian Botham Age: 40 Counties: Somerset, Worcestershire, Durham Specialty: All-rounder Nominated by: Derbyshire, Northamptonshire International experience: 102 Tests (former England captain) Profession: TV personality Comments: Sly TV commentator, A Question of Sport. Notes: Daily Mirror columnist, charity work. Nicknames: Beely	<p>"I would love to serve on the selection panel because the big challenge now is to find a team and to make it turn England into a world power again. I would have no problem working with Illy. Basically we stand for the same thing"</p>	<p>Limitless potential for strife...or perhaps success. In 1995 Botham described "Raymond" "Pontius Pilate" Illingworth as "a whinger not a motivator". Illy regards outspokenness as his prerogative, is unlikely to welcome another free-speaker to the team. Botham says he thinks the two can work together. He would.</p>
 Chris Cowdrey Age: 38 Counties: Kent, Glamorgan Specialty: All-rounder Nominated by: Kent International experience: 6 Tests (former England captain) Profession: Owns a public speaking business called "The Great Delivery Company": does PR work for Lordships Comments: Depends on how willing and able he is to give up other roles. Likely to be able to devote a lot of time.	<p>"I'm honoured Kent should want to nominate me. I hadn't thought of standing, but I'm excited at the prospect. The thing I suppose I've got in my favour is age and time availability"</p>	<p>Unlikely to be a factor. Cowdrey has gone out of his way to emphasise the spare time he has to watch a lot of cricket, which would suit Illingworth; a relatively non-controversial figure which would suit him more. His "southernness" and age may count against him.</p>
 John Edrich Age: 58 County: Surrey Specialty: Opening bat Nominated by: Surrey International experience: 77 Tests Profession: Corporate entertaining Comments: Entertaining corporate Notes: Believed to be one of two favoured by Ray Illingworth.	<p>Unavailable for comment.</p>	<p>Like Bolus, could work both ways. Believed to be Illingworth's other choice, which may count against him with some counties. On the other hand Edrich's previous experience as a selector may give him delusions of knowledge which may rankle with the chairman of selectors.</p>
 Graham Gooch Age: 42 County: Essex Specialty: Opening bat, medium-paced bowler Nominated by: Essex International experience: 113 Tests (former England captain) Profession: Cricketer Comments: Full-time player Notes: Captain of rebel tour to South Africa 1982, banned from Test cricket for three years. Nicknames: Zap, Goodie	<p>"My heart and soul was with England when I played and was captain. Selection should represent a cross section of people in the game"</p>	<p>Potential for conflict. Like Barnett, Gooch's playing commitments are unlikely to endear him to Illingworth. Nor will his friendship with Ian Botham. Then again, Gooch's reputation as a miserable man from Essex might just appeal to a misanthropic Yorkshireman.</p>
 David Graveney Age: 43 Counties: Gloucestershire, Somerset, Durham Specialty: Left-arm spinner Nominated by: Gloucestershire International experience: None Profession: Secretary of the Professional Players Union, Current England selector Comments: Already does the job. Nicknames: Gravity, Grav	<p>"I apologise for any distress this decision may have caused. It has always been my wish to serve the game to the best of my ability and I shall continue to do this in the future" - after he was told to pull out of the running for the chairman of selectors job by the Professional Cricketers' Association, who he works for as Secretary</p>	<p>Virtually guaranteed to be explosive. Graveney's abortive challenge for Illy's job as chairman of selectors brought a typically barbed response from the incumbent. Despite his current status as a selector the relationship is bound to be caustic if renewed by the counties.</p>
 Geoff Miller Age: 43 County: Derbyshire, Essex Specialty: All-rounder Nominated by: Hampshire International experience: 34 Tests Profession: After-dinner speaker, part-time cricket coach at Trent College Comments: Not too heavy.	<p>"I feel we need to be positive about things. You can't sit by and see the English game falling down"</p>	<p>Difficult to predict. Miller has no history of contentious behaviour, but Illy may feel that he's better off with older, established veterans around him.</p>

Compiled by Nick Harris

and newspapers. By throwing such headline-making names as Ian Botham and Graham Gooch into the field for what is, in effect, a pretty irrelevant contest, the counties have cleverly drawn the spotlight away from

their own shortcomings as the providers of England's Test cricketers. Immediately, the most important issue in the media became not England's poor showing in South Africa and in the World Cup, but

whether "Illy" can live with "Beefy". The Tories should be pounding a path to the county grounds for lessons in spin-doctoring — not that spin is on the county agenda all that often.

When Illingworth was appointed the chairman of selectors two years ago, high on his agenda was winning back the Ashes, something he achieved as England's captain in Australia in 1970-71. He didn't do

There are five spaces on the panel who select the England team. The chairman (Ray Illingworth), the team captain (almost certainly Mike Atherton) and the team coach (David Lloyd) automatically qualify.

The other two positions on the panel are voted for annually. The 18 first-class counties have two votes each, as do MCC and the Minor Counties, making a total of 40 votes.

When the TCCB was asked for a job description, a spokesman said: "There isn't a job description. It's not a job as such." The position is unpaid.

There is no written list of official duties, but Ray Illingworth has recommended the following:

Selectors must watch 90 days of cricket a year. Selectors must be able to attend 10-plus necessary meetings. Selectors must not have any impartial duties of a selector.

concentrating more on his own back than, say, Stewart's front foot. All the kerfuffle over Illingworth's countenance — likewise Mike Atherton's — is also a red herring. There's something inherently Protestant in the seemingly down-to-earth, no-nonsense game to the level of the level of the spirit of cricket exemplified by Sri Lanka in the World Cup. It's a national characteristic.

So what about this eight-man exercise in democracy that comes to a head this week? Does it matter which two get the votes of the counties and MCC to join Illingworth, David Lloyd, the new coach, and Atherton, assuming he is captain, on the selection committee. No, not in the short term. It's not as if the selectors are spoilt for choice when picking the England team, even if they do manage the occasional baffling selection. What it might indicate, however, is how the counties view the long-term ambitions of men like Botham, Gooch and David Graveney — should we be told how the voting went.

What it might also show is just how much, or how little, the county managements know about the game, as opposed to the business of cricket. They offered some evidence of this in 1993 when, after only one season, they abandoned the 50-over format in the Sunday League. True, it was initially foolish to choose the one competition that has the full fury of a County Championship match raging either side of it. But if the counties were serious about England's prospects in the World Cup, surely one of the three limited-overs competitions could have been played under World Cup rules?

This season the Benson and Hedges Cup will be played over 50 overs. But it's a little late. The horses have long bolted and you can't see them for the smoke.

Graeme Wright is a former editor of Wisden

WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE

TODAY

Football

Matches not on pools coupons:
3.0 United States v Spain
FL EURO TROPHY
SEMI-FINALS FIRST LEG

Italy v Netherlands
Manchester v Chelsea

10.0 LEAGUE PREMIER Division: Bishop's Cleeve v Chesham; Chesham v Bishop's Cleeve; Bishop's Cleeve v Chesham; Chesham v Bishop's Cleeve

11.0 LEAGUE PREMIER Division: Bishop's Cleeve v Chesham; Chesham v Bishop's Cleeve; Bishop's Cleeve v Chesham; Chesham v Bishop's Cleeve

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sport

A strange mixture overwhelmed Fenton's face, part elation but mainly guilt, as if he really shouldn't have been doing it

Black Monday it is now known on Tyneside: Red Letter Day in certain parts of Manchester. And the sight which will stick most in the mind after Blackburn's cruel destruction of Newcastle's championship hopes on Easter Monday was not Kevin Keegan, the moment the final whistle went, bravely shaking Ray Harford by the hand when what he really wanted to do was shake the linesman by the throat. Nor was it the six-year-old in the crowd, decked out in a black and white curly wig, trying to comfort his dad, trying to tell him that it didn't really matter, that football wasn't that important. And obviously failing. No, it was the look on Graham Fenton's face as he chipped his second goal over the hopeless figure of Shaka Hislop in the last minute that lingers in the memory. It was a look you don't of-

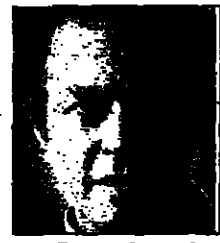
ten see on a football pitch, though probably not one to make it into the explain-the-goal-celebration round on *They Think It's All Over*. A strange mixture overwhelmed his face, part elation, but mainly guilt, as if he really shouldn't have been doing it. It was the look of a naughty schoolboy.

The commentator, anxious to extract every morsel of significance from the moment, explained it all: Fenton was a Geordie, a born-and-bred Newcastle fan, his family were in the stands en masse, dozens of them decked out in black and white, not minding at all if Graham scored twice, so long as Newcastle scored three times. And then he goes and spoils it all, single-handedly killing off his heroes' hopes (or maybe not single-handedly, the Newcastle defence did their best to accommodate him).

The next day, the irony overdrive began: here was the Geordie who broke Geordie hearts. A clever news agency got hold of a picture of the young Fenton meeting Kevin Keegan at a Newcastle school of excellence back in the Eighties, which was circulated to the tabloids and run under headlines saying "the one that got away". Fenton was interviewed ("I'm not sure if I'll be welcomed back home"), his mum was interviewed ("we're still proud of him"), his dad was interviewed ("I'm not sure whether to board up the house or emigrate"). If his dog had been interviewed it would probably have been called Keegan.

It is in the nature of football that players will end up playing against the team they support. Steve McNamara and Robbie Fowler were brought up Evertonians, Noel

Jim White



ON SATURDAY

Whelan remains such a Leeds supporter that, despite being off-loaded to Coventry, he was spotted with his mates in the crowd at his old club's Coca-Cola Cup semi-final with Birmingham. But oddly the times when professional fans inflict

mortal damage on their favourites are rare.

Indeed Fenton's uneasy reaction to his strike was reminiscent of the most famous occasion when it went pear-shaped for a supporter: Denis Law's back-heel for City against United in the Manchester derby in April 1974, the goal that sent United down. Actually it didn't, they were as good as relegated already. What really sent them down was fielding a pitiful team that was so goal-shy their keeper Alex Stepney, with two successful penalties, was the leading scorer for much of the season. But try telling that to Denis Law.

The goal itself was appropriately comical: Francis Lee cut the ball across from the right-hand side of the penalty area, it ticked past a couple of hopeless, prone, black-socked

legs and landed just behind Law. He did his best to avoid it, but some recalcitrant gene of professionalism made him flick out a heel in its direction. The ball hit it, left Alex Stepney flat-footed and bobbed into the net. It was a moment of pure hubris. Law was only there, in the wrong colour shirt, because the manager had prematurely off-loaded him, shabbily ill-treating the great United hero by sending him into City exile. But you could tell that if revenge was on his mind, it was no consolation. Mike Doyle, a City stalwart, slapped him round the face a bit and told him to snap out of it, he'd just scored a goal against the enemy, so get celebrating. But Law couldn't, so upset was he at scoring against his team, he just went off the pitch, went straight home and never kicked a ball in League football again.

Twenty-two years on, Law is constantly reminded of that moment. Whenever he goes to Manchester, people want to talk to him about it. Never mind that he scored 236 goals in his City career, it's the one he got for City everyone remembers. He's been asked about it so often, he now pretends to have erased it entirely from his memory. "You know," he says, as the anniversary approaches, "people tell me it happened, but I can't remember a thing about it. That one I got in the '63 Cup final, though..." Graham Fenton may think he's had a bad week; but that it will all be forgotten after the weekend. What he doesn't appreciate is that in 22 years' time, someone in his home town will ask him to talk them through the two goals that sunk the Toon. Or maybe he does. And that explained the look on his face.

Super-12 makes supercharged start in Australia

While professionalism is threatening to cause a schism in English club rugby, Down Under it has been used a launch-pad to increase the sport's popularity. Greg Growden reports from Sydney

While the move to professionalism in England has proved a troubled road with more blind turns no doubt still to come, in Australia the end of the amateur era could hardly have gone more smoothly. Rugby league, with its stranglehold as the premier football code in New South Wales and Queensland, has always been Big Brother, but as union has made its bold bound into the business arena, league has ironically been pitched into disarray by a dispute over power and money.

Not quite. But there are encouraging signs that the long undernourished underling is seriously threatening rugby league.

The reason for the change is simple. The southern hemisphere administrators have in the Super-12 tournament devised a competition which has been an unqualified success, attracting record crowds, overwhelming media attention, plus the most marketable style of play - expression rather than inhibition. The tournament could also not have been better timed, coinciding with the Australian Rugby League's unconscious attempt to self-destruct, through its highly emotive and divisive battle with Rupert Murdoch's rebel Super League organisation.

During a period where many league supporters became sick and tired of a bewildering courtroom battle, which revolved

around greed and ego, the Super-12 was the ideal alternative.

While the New South Wales league premiership was placed in limbo for two weeks, the only rugby available was the Super-12. And the tournament rose to the occasion, with several outstanding matches involving NSW succeeding in convincing some fans to convert.

The standard has been irresistible, bringing Test excitement to the provincial level

The early crowd figures proved that. When the league competition eventually started in late March, attendances were down 53.4 per cent, while representative rugby crowds had increased by 45 per cent. From only 3,217 spectators who watched Australian Capital Territory play NSW in Sydney in 1994, their next encounter, held last month at the Sydney Football Stadium, attracted 20,687.

This was before a crowd of 30,147 watched the NSW-Natal Super-12 match at the Sydney Football Stadium, the biggest crowd to watch the state side

since Fiji attracted 38,000 against the Waratahs at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 1992.

Away from Sydney, attendances have been healthy. ACT reported their biggest ever crowd in Canberra when the Brumbies played Australia, while attendances at Ballymore for Queensland have always been above the 15,000 mark.

The playing standard has also proved irresistible, bringing Test excitement to the provincial level. This has partly been brought about by the successful introduction of law changes, including enforcing the back row to stay engaged until the ball has left the scrum-base, and a bonus competition point for any team which scores four or more tries in a match.

This has prompted every team to be adventurous and test their abilities, even when matches appear lost. It has also encouraged the most vibrant of back-line play, with several teams, Auckland, Natal, Northern Transvaal, NSW and Queensland, producing intricate and beautifully thought out moves, which would do any Barbarians line-up proud. Not having as many loose-forwards crowding the defensive line helps as well.

As important has been the competition point given to any team finishing within seven points of their opponents. So no one has an excuse to give up.

Those in the northern hemisphere should take the hint, because such innovations would help to enliven a Five Nations tournament, which is currently treated with total disdain in the southern hemisphere.

Sure, there has been the occasional headless chicken match during the Super-12, with all-out frenetic attack outweighing flimsy defence. But the bulk of the games have stood out because of the excellent standard. The Super-12 is not yet



Jonah Lomu (white shirt), playing for the Auckland Blues in a Super-12 match in Palmerston North, New Zealand, last month. Photograph: Fotopress

hemisphere should take the hint, because such innovations would help to enliven a Five Nations tournament, which is currently treated with total disdain in the southern hemisphere. Sure, there has been the occasional headless chicken match during the Super-12, with all-out frenetic attack outweighing flimsy defence. But the bulk of the games have stood out because of the excellent standard. The Super-12 is not yet

perfect. There are some problems areas, particularly the poor standard of refereeing, and the vast differences in interpretations from country to country. The use of local referees has led to accusations of bias, with repeated complaints from coaches that their team "has been robbed" when away from home. The organisers are already considering introducing neutral referees for the second half of the Super-12, but this is

too late for several disgruntled players, coaches and officials. Another dilemma is the inevitability of the Super-12 turning into a court drama. There is overwhelming anger on the eastern seaboard of Australia that hardly any of the Super-12 matches are being shown on terrestrial television, instead being limited to the Murdoch-backed Foxtel pay-TV network, which only a small percentage of the population has access to.

Foxtel's main pay-TV opponent, Optus Vision, claim that they also have a contractual agreement to show the Super-12. Consequently the Australian TV sports war has now crossed codes with Optus challenging New Corporation's \$A780m (£370m) 10-year deal with the southern hemisphere unions for the pay-TV rights.

Optus, partly funded by Kerry Packer, have filed proceedings in the NSW Supreme

Court against the Australian Rugby Football Union, News Corporation and Foxtel, for alleged breach of contract. However, the legal action is not scheduled to start until after the Super-12 final on 25 May, prompting at least one tournament free of courtroom bickering, and the fine mess which has given the code such a filip at the expense of rugby league. Greg Growden writes for the Sydney Morning Herald

Leicester see a chink of light

STEVE BALE

In between the unpleasanties between the Rugby Football Union and its biggest clubs, there is occasionally the light relief of some rugby. Gloucester's midweek defeat of Bath was a thrilling end in itself but also the means by which championship and relegation issues that were beginning to be settled have suddenly reopened.

So this afternoon Leicester go to Bristol in the unexpected knowledge that, provided they win their four remaining games, Bath too will need to win their three in order to regain the title - and even then it would be only on points difference.

Bath have, however, been this way before and the previous years of the Courage league

have shown them to have formidable powers of instant recuperation. Saracens are no less frantic about relegation than Gloucester, or since Wednesday Bristol, but it is their ill-fortune to have to face Bath now.

Saracens have given us problems in the past. Phil de Glanville, the Bath captain, said yesterday recalling the defeat at Southgate that cost them the title five years ago. "But we are at our most dangerous when responding to defeat," Saracens, by the way, were represented at Kingsholm to see how it can be done.

Though Jonathan Callard, the full-back's place-kicking critically absent from Gloucester, is available for Bath, Jeremy Guscott is still on a TV assignment in South Africa.

prompting a move from wing to centre for Adebayo Adebayo and from centre to outside-half for Mike Catt to the exclusion of Richard Buland.

Bristol went below Gloucester as a result of Wednesday's events but have the important advantage of a game in hand over both Gloucester and Saracens and at the end of the season would anticipate winning, as everyone else, has at West Hartlepool, who are already relegated. Today they will not be pleased to see the return after injury of Leicester's captain, Dean Richards.

If Richard Hill, the Gloucester coach, gets his players playing against Harlequins at The Stoop as they did against Bath in the less refined setting of Kingsholm, it will be an achievement to rank with any in

his playing career with Bath and England.

It will be no less difficult, with Quins certain of a European place whoever is organising next season's club competitions and another daunting visit to Leicester next up for Gloucester on Wednesday week, before the prospectively decisive encounter with Saracens in a fortnight.

COURAGE CLUBS' CHAMPIONSHIP NATIONAL LEAGUE ONE TABLE

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bath	15	13	0	2	472	212	26
Leicester	15	12	0	3	354	176	24
Harlequins	15	11	0	4	470	276	22
Worcesters	15	8	0	7	302	291	16
Wales	15	8	0	7	273	288	16
Cardiff	15	7	0	8	270	283	14
Gloucester	15	5	0	10	233	299	10
Bristol	15	5	0	10	213	330	10
Saracens	15	5	0	10	252	292	10
W Hartlepool	14	0	0	14	245	467	0

Howey joins hopeful young Britons

Judo

DONALD OWENS

This year's British Open Judo Championship, to be held at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena today, will be unique for two reasons: it will have the most participants ever but all of Britain's top players, save one, will be missing from the competition.

A total of 538 participants have registered for the annual event. However, most of Britain's leading prospects for the Olympics are in Japan for intensive preparation training. Kate Howey, 23, a former world silver medalist at under-72 kilograms, is the only top British player competing. Having performed badly in the Dutch Open last week, Howey decided she needed one more competition before the European Championships in May. She will leave for Japan tomorrow, to join the rest of the national team.

The British Open is not regarded as an A tournament. As such, it is regarded as relatively unimportant for players trying to qualify for the Olympics. However, it will provide a good chance for others in the national squad to prove themselves and possibly to win honours in Britain's most prestigious tournament.

Considering that only 14 countries have sent players (fewer than usual) the high number of registered participants suggests that many young British hopefuls are making the most of this opportunity.

SEDGEFIELD

1.45 German Legend 2.15 Russian Castle 2.45 Gloucester 3.15 Knockbuster 3.45 Uron V 4.15 Flash of Ream 4.45 Southern Cross

GOING TO THE FINE
Left-hand, undulating course. Easy fences and long run-in on chert course of Gillydy.
Course to be last time 1 mile SW of town near junction of A630 and A177. Bus service from Stockton railway station (10 miles away) or Durham railway station (12 miles away). ADMISSION: Paddock 30p (cash only). Course 50p. CASH PRIZES: Free.

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Go Gilly (3.45) was at Carlisle on Monday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Fred Faggles (1.45) has been won 212 miles by C. J. Jackson from Carlisle, Harford & Wares; My Sister Lucy (1.45) won 180 miles by M. Whitehouse from Church Street, Strarburgh.

1.45 EDEN ARMS SHALLOW HOTEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEY'S HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) £3,000 added 3m 3f 110yds

1. SP-4000 ARMY LAMP (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
2. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
3. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
4. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
5. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
6. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor

2.15 LORDS TAVERNERS NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,500 added 3m 3f

1. 21440P ANDROS GALE (22) J. Johnson 7 11 9. A. S. Smith
2. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
3. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
4. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
5. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
6. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor

2.45 VAUX HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,500 added 2m 1f

1. 112-420 LITTLE BROWLEY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 9. A. S. Smith
2. 120-635 SEVEN ANVILS (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
3. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
4. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
5. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
6. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor

3.15 REG BOYLE MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 5f 110yds

1. 000-400 ARMY LAMP (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
2. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
3. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
4. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
5. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
6. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor

3.45 A1 BANDAG HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,500 added 3m 3f

1. 112-795 MAIRIE BURN (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
2. 120-635 SEVEN ANVILS (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
3. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
4. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
5. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
6. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor

4.15 REKAM HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,500 added 2m 110yds

1. 120-635 SEVEN ANVILS (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
2. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
3. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
4. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
5. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
6. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor

4.45 LEVY BOARD NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m

1. 120-635 SEVEN ANVILS (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
2. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
3. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
4. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
5. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
6. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor

4.55 LEVY BOARD NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m

1. 120-635 SEVEN ANVILS (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
2. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
3. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
4. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
5. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
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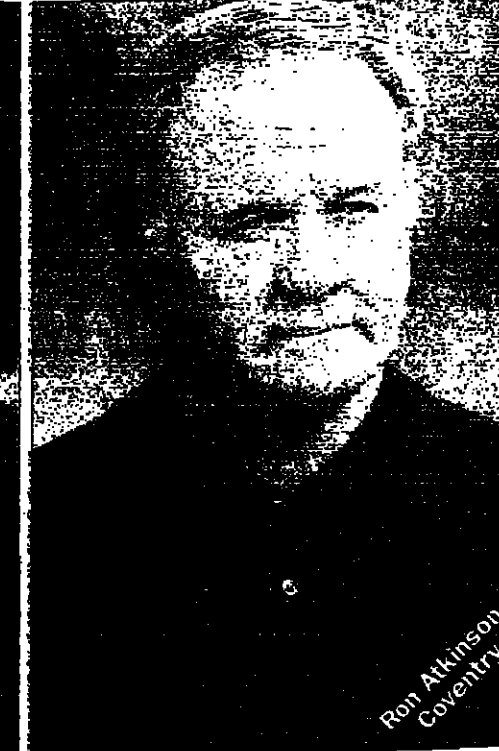
5.05 LEVY BOARD NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m

1. 120-635 SEVEN ANVILS (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
2. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
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4. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
5. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor
6. 000400 MONDAY (22) J. Johnson 7 11 10. S. Taylor

RESULTS

Event	Winner	Time
1.45 German Legend	German Legend	2.15
2.15 Russian Castle	Russian Castle	2.45
2.45 Gloucester	Gloucester	3.15
3.15 Knockbuster	Knockbuster	3.45
3.45 Uron V	Uron V	4.15
4.15 Flash of Ream	Flash of Ream	4.45
4.45 Southern Cross	Southern Cross	5.15

sport



Drop zone: three from five will go

FEAR OF FALLING: Five Premiership managers are trying to avoid demotion to the Endsligh League, a decline that dramatically reduces gate receipts, commercial income and TV revenue. **Glenn Moore reports**

There will be moments at Highbury Road this afternoon when Ron Atkinson and Ray Wilkins will catch each other's eye and, briefly, remember better days chasing trophies at Old Trafford. Then they will turn again to the task in hand, that of lifting their respective teams, Coventry City and Queen's Park Rangers, out of the relegation mire.

Both have been relegated before. Atkinson with Sheffield Wednesday six years ago. Wilkins as a young player with Chelsea in the Seventies, but the impact of those relegations is nothing to what it would be like this time around.

That is because relegation carries a greater penalty than ever before. As the gap grows between the Premiership and the First Division, so does the cost of the drop.

"When we were relegated last year it wiped the thick end of two million pounds off the revenue account," said David Sheepshanks, chairman of Ipswich Town. "Half of that was lost gate receipts, half was commercial income, the Sky TV money and so forth."

The calculations at Selhurst Park were even worse. "It cost us three million," said Ron Noades, the chairman of Crystal Palace.

The bad news for their counterparts at Coventry and QPR, Manchester City, Southampton and Bolton, the clubs under threat this season, is that the price of failure is about to spiral.

The crux is the Sky TV deal. It has a year to run but an early renegotiation is anticipated. "I expect they will sit down this summer

and the new deal will be worth a 100 to 120 million pounds," said Noades. "That is five million pounds a club. Anyone who goes down this season is kissing goodbye to four million on TV income alone. With gate receipts and other revenue they will be losing five million."

The current Premiership television deal is worth £1.5-£3m per club (the money is merit and appearance-linked). The current Endsligh deal is worth less than £500,000. The Endsligh League have already signed a new deal (with Sky) which will push television income to £750,000-£1.2m for First Division clubs next year but, as Sheepshanks notes, "it will in no way make up the shortfall with the Premiership."

Ipswich, like all relegated clubs, are cushioned by receiving half the base sum (about £500,000) from the Premiership as well as Endsligh TV money. But as this expires after two

years, during which the clubs in the Premier League have been getting even richer, an instant return is imperative. Four clubs have bounced straight back in the last five seasons, one of them Crystal Palace two years ago. But, of the 10 that failed to do so, only Middlesbrough later got up. Notts County and Swindon even went down again while seven remain in the First Division.

"If you fail to get straight back then you have real problems," Noades said. "You have to decide when you go down if you can afford to keep what you have got. If you can you should be able to go back up. If you have to sell players it becomes very hard."

Having kept most of their side in 1993, and gone straight back as champions, Palace sold the bulk of the team last summer. Some players wanted to go but, said Noades, sales were also forced by the bank.

"They reduced our overdraft facility by £3.7m from £6.7m. We had to sell to meet that and to cut wage bills - unless you do you are paying Premiership wages on Endsligh income. Some of those Premiership clubs must be crapping themselves. Coventry bought two players I could not afford to pay."

Coventry are one of only two clubs never to have been relegated from the top division. At the other extreme, Birmingham and Leicester have gone down nine times with Manchester City in danger of joining them.

For clubs of reasonable, but limited resources, such a yo-yo existence is increasingly likely. "I can see the same three clubs going up and down year after year," Noades said. "The Premiership clubs will be gaining so much income they will be able to cream off anybody of any ability in the lower divisions."

Their squads will get bigger while the quality of lower division players declines. Any club that does go down and keeps its players will go straight back up as long as it is not suffering some kind of internal turmoil.

A look at this year's First Division suggests the trend has already started. It may be open but it is not very good - 16 different clubs, two-thirds of the division, have filled the first three places at some time during the season. In the Premiership only seven clubs have done so. "People say we would not survive if we went up but we would have a different team then," Noades said. "With our new income level we could buy three of four players."

They would need them. If Bolton are relegated it will mean that, of 26 teams promoted since 1987, 15 have been relegated within four

seasons. Ten will have gone straight back down (including six of the eight teams promoted through the play-offs). The only team promoted through the play-offs to have survived more than three seasons is Blackburn, and they spent millions to do so. "All the teams that have come up and been successful have spent money," noted Scott Sellers, who was twice promoted and is now with Bolton. "Blackburn and Newcastle did. Middlesbrough spent enough to keep out of trouble." Middlesbrough have spent £10m.

Palace, like the other clubs who went straight back (Nottingham Forest, Sheffield Wednesday and West Ham), do have the potential to generate decent income. Those who have not regained premier status have tended to be smaller clubs - Luton, Oldham, Millwall, Charlton - clubs whose days in the

top division already seem an aeon away.

As a small-town club Ipswich are keenly aware of the need to enable such teams to compete. "We have taken a leading role in trying to persuade the Football League to talk to the Premier League about narrowing the gap," Sheepshanks said. "Otherwise clubs will yo-yo."

"Communities like Stoke, Sunderland, Ipswich and Norwich have good populations and support. Their fans have the right to support their club in the top league if their club gets it right on and off the field. That club should be allowed to be competitive. At present it is not a level playing field. I am all for rewarding success with merit payments and television appearance money, but not at the price of penalising failure. The basic subsidy should cover more than 20 clubs."

"Half the Premiership clubs agree - the bottom half. Those which have flirted with danger themselves."

The thought will certainly cross a few chairmen's minds today, not that they will be able to do anything about it now. At this stage, it is down to the managers, the players and luck.

"Luck plays a part," Atkinson said, "but the most important factor is the mental toughness of your players. Sometimes your hero is someone you never expected it to be. This is a massive game for me and Ray. We will both be hoping we are the one commiserating the other at the end."

THE BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL											
The last five games			How they stand this morning			Remaining fixtures					
Points out of possible 15			P W D L F A Pts GD								
Aston Villa (A) 1-0-3; Blackburn (H) 1-0-1; Leeds (A) 1-0-1; QPR (A) 1-0-3; Coventry (H) 1-0-1	6/15	16	Southampton	34	7	10	17	30	50	31	-20
Wimbledon (A) 1-0-3; Man Utd (H) 1-2-3; Bolton (A) 1-1-1; West Ham (A) 1-2-4; Southampton (H) 1-2-1	1/15	17	Man City	35	7	10	18	29	56	31	-27
Everton (H) 1-0-3; Newcastle (A) 1-1-2; Southampton (H) 1-0-3; Chelsea (A) 1-1-1; Man Utd (H) 1-1-1	8/15	18	QPR	35	8	6	21	35	53	30	-18
Man Utd (A) 1-0-1; Liverpool (H) 1-0-1; Tottenham (A) 1-1-3; Southampton (A) 1-0-1; Bolton (H) 1-0-2	3/15	19	Coventry	34	6	12	16	39	60	30	-21
Chelsea (H) 1-0-3; Everton (A) 1-0-3; Sheffield Wed (H) 1-2-1; Tottenham (H) 1-2-3; Coventry (A) 1-2-1	9/15	20	Bolton	35	8	5	22	38	67	29	-29

Exiled Geordies hold key to Newcastle's fate

Rangers set for final lap in title race

Scottish football

Suddenly, exiled Geordies litter Newcastle's path like the ticker-tape which their followers once had on standby to celebrate the championship.

Close on the heels of Alan Shearer and Graham Fenton, the Tynesiders who combined to secure Blackburn's dramatic victory over Kevin Keegan's side on Monday, come another pair of likely lads ready to do down their home-town team.

Brian Little, who brings Aston Villa to St James' Park tomorrow, had a black-and-white striped jersey as a boy and has cousins who are season-ticket holders. Tommy Johnson, whose attacking ability persuaded Little to let Fenton go, joins the Toon Army when he is not playing.

Newcastle, who may start nine points behind Manchester United, suffered another setback in training yesterday when Keith Gillespie twisted an ankle which may prevent his facing Villa. Keegan can be excused for feeling it is time the leaders endured the odd twist of malign fate themselves. His old club Southampton, fighting

for Premiership survival, may just be the team to inflict one.

Both the Saints manager and director of football, Dave Mearns, and Lawrie McMenemy respectively, are Geordies, while the captain, Barry Venison, once led Newcastle. Moreover, their need for points is, if anything, more pressing than United's.

If there is to be an upset, Matthew Le Tissier will surely have to be back to his best. The

Phil Shaw looks at the weekend's football programme which for some clubs may prove the point of no return

Channel Islander has yet to score from open play this season. But Dave Beasant, the former Newcastle keeper who is likely to be recalled by Mearns, believes Le Tissier could be hailed as "Wor Mat" come this evening.

"Matt's started to do things

in training that give us all hope," Beasant said. Southampton also have a dubious FA Cup defeat to avenge. Against a team unbeaten in 19 games, and reinforced by another Tyne and motion man, Steve Bruce, it is a tall order.

While Villa have taken a

solitary point from five meetings since Newcastle's promotion, two Easter wins suggest Little is countenancing no complacency. Another sub-plot involves Shaka Hislop and Dwight Yorke, friends and colleagues with Trinidad and Tobago, although Keegan will

demand that the heat is on Villa and their stand-in centre-back Ian Taylor.

Two of the five relegation candidates, Coventry and Queen's Park Rangers, tangle at Highbury Road in a battle of wits between Ron Atkinson and the man he may now regret having dubbed "The Crab," Ray Wilkins.

Wilkins' chairman, Peter Ellis, has described the match as

"a 20-pointer". Manchester City, directly above both teams, would probably prefer them to draw. Of City's match with Sheffield Wednesday, Alan Ball said: "We must make sure we don't lose." With fixtures against Villa and Liverpool to finish with, they need to win.

Like Wednesday, West Ham have nothing to play for in terms of Europe or safety, which showed in their lethargy at Liverpool on Monday. Bolton's fighting finale may have come too late, but the Hammers will have to be more alert today to stop them departing with honour.

By the time Newcastle step out, neighbouring Wearsiders could be Premiership territory again. Sunderland will be promoted if they win at Sheffield United, the First Division's form side, and Crystal Palace fail to beat Southend. With Howard Kendall lying in wait for his protégé, Peter Reid, Sunderland may have to wait.

Meanwhile, Palace must look to their one-time tenants, Charlton, to loosen Derby's grip on the second automatic promotion place tomorrow.

Man Utd (H); Apr 17: Newcastle (A); Apr 27: Bolton (A); May 5: Wimbledon (A);

Today: Sheffield Wed (H); Apr 27: Aston Villa (A); May 5: Liverpool (H)

Today: Coventry (A); Apr 27: West Ham (H); May 5: North Forest (A)

Today: QPR (H); Apr 17: Nottm Forest (A); Apr 27: Wimbledon (A); May 5: Leeds (H)

Today: West Ham (A); Apr 27: Southampton (H); May 5: Arsenal (A)

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Today: West Ham (A); Apr 27: Southampton (H); May 5: Arsenal (A)

I wanted to be with other supporters sharing a common prayer

Saturday 15th April, 1989 is a date that sticks in the memory. Liverpool versus Nottingham Forest. FA Cup semi-final. Hillsborough. Sheffield. The memory sticks in the throat.

Some seven years on, the very mention of the name Hillsborough still instantly conjures up in the mind those nightmarish television images of panic, of tears of hopelessness, of sideways-turned faces squeezed against cage fencing, of advertising hoardings being used as stretchers for the injured, dead and dying of sorrowful comforting of tragedy.

All week Liverpool, Sheffield and Nottingham mourned as one, united by their shared experience. All week England mourned as one, united by the thought that there but for the

grace of God go I. How I would have liked to have been supporting my team, Chelsea, in that semi-final. How grateful I now was that yet again they weren't good enough.

All through the week the people of Liverpool turned Anfield into a shrine. But for most football fans across the nation, the following Saturday was the first opportunity to show their grief, their shock, their horror and their support for the scared and grieving.

I was staying away that weekend, and just as Remembrance Sunday draws me to church, I found myself drawn to a football match. I wanted to be with other supporters, showing respect, sharing a common prayer. So I went to watch Hereford United play Doncaster Rovers

in a Fourth Division match that had no significance whatsoever, both having settled into positions just below half-way in the table. It is one of the most memorable events of my life. Hereford fielded a young Darren Peacock and Doncaster a not-so-young Gerry Daly.

Since I hadn't come to support either team I went through the first turnstile I came to. This was a mistake. Inside, I found a cage custom-designed for either orang-utans or travelling supporters. There was plenty of space but, for the first time, I felt uneasy being behind bars in a football ground.

Beyond this chilly, shady area was sunshine and fence-free terracing and I managed to negotiate a transfer to a sunny spot among the home

FAN'S EYE VIEW No 145 Hillsborough CLIVE TRUSSON

supporters. It was announced that the game would kick off at six minutes past three, the time the Liverpool v Forest match was stopped. The players and match officials stopped their warm-up exercises and gathered around the centre circle. A local vicar stood with them, a microphone in his hand, and the Salvation Army lined up on the touchline.

The service began to a congregation of 1,800 brethren of the family of football lovers. It

was clear to all that this service was so much more important, so much more necessary than the football we'd paid to watch.

The vicar began, "Last Saturday football supporters gathered together, just as we are gathered here today, to watch a football match. They were ordinary people like you and me..."

I don't recall what he said next, my thoughts were already with those killed, maimed and mentally scarred on Leppings

Lane. As he spoke, people in the seats began to stand up like a slow-motion Mexican wave. It was a deliberate, if unconscious, act of grief.

The vicar led the prayer. In Hereford Cathedral they would have knelt; at Hereford United they stood. It seemed right to stand, just as football fans had stood for over a century, just as those who had died had stood. We stood, we prayed, we remembered.

As we were asked to observe the silence, a young boy in front of me propped his inflatable skeleton against the crash barrier so that it was standing two, a chap near me stopped eating his pasta, another switched off the small radio that had seemingly been glued to his ear. I looked around the ground.

Heads were hung. I thought of the thousands around the country doing the same thing. Those dreadful images flashed across my mind again making me squirm. I thought of the times I'd been in a crush situation: at Stamford Bridge, Upton Park, Old Trafford, Roker Park, Loftus Road and Wembley. I recalled struggling for breath in the urgency to get in to see Chelsea v New York Cosmos. This led me, perhaps irreverently, to thoughts of the display Johan Cruyff put on and Butch Wilkins' brilliant late equaliser. But somehow such footballing memories seemed inappropriate: the dead of Hillsborough loved their football too.

When the vicar spoke again, he invited us to sing "Abide With Me". Apparently song sheets had been handed out at the turnstiles, but I had missed out. The Sally Army struck up and the vicar led the singing. He sang from his heart. The crowd sang from theirs.

When the band stopped playing there was a further 10 second silence. In Hereford Cathedral they would have then sat down in silence; at Hereford United they started applauding. The ground reverberated to the kind of handclapping more likely to be heard in the theatre. But it seemed fitting and was uplifting.

The match was a regular enough affair. Hereford went 2-0 up before Doncaster pulled one back. Hereford celebrated by shaking their inflatable bananas and by climbing up the 200 cage. We all knew the fences had to come down,

Aldridge
champion
Tranmere

Football

Cantona
the cold

McCarthy pleads

Sampras puts
pressure
on Muster

An early end to Sherry's fairy-tale

SPORT

RFU gives in to demands of the clubs

Rugby Union
STEVE BAILE

English rugby union's governing body last night as good as capitulated to the leading clubs who have been threatening to secede after a day-long emergency session of the Rugby Football Union's full committee at the London Hilton.

In accordance with the wishes of the clubs, Bill Bishop, the RFU president, was drafted into the negotiating team — though still under the nominal chairmanship of Cliff Brittle, the highly contentious RFU executive committee chairman. "We wish the negotiations to continue as speedily as possible," Tony Hallett, the RFU secretary, said.

Far more significant is that the RFU has agreed on virtually all of the 12 negotiating positions put to it by the clubs, leaving control of the game itself as the only outstanding issue. It is impossible to believe the clubs will not agree to compromise on this, especially as it now appears they will receive all the monies from the competitions in which they participate.

The pressure on the RFU increased when it became clear that England's First Division players, who will be the new professionals whoever is in charge,

were ready to side with the clubs rather than the RFU.

This week the clubs' response to the RFU's outright refusal to cede any of its administrative or financial powers over the professional game provoked the clubs into announcing a boycott of next season's RFU league and cup competitions in order to play in their own. A declaration of full-scale independence would have been their next step.

As the RFU's full committee was gathered yesterday, the Bath captain, Phil de Glanville, one of those desiring personally with the warring parties on behalf of the piggies-in-the-middle, pleaded for an accommodation. Lawrence Dallaglio and Paul Johnson, captains of Wasps and Welsh league and 12-team English Conference — would be preferable to the union's with its smaller European involvement and insistence on the intrusion of divisional rugby.

"We're not going to be publicly drawn on one side or the other. To have to choose between club and country is not a position we should ever be put in," de Glanville said. "What is very worrying for the players is that a lot of them have to make career decisions about next season and for them it's a nightmare scenario."

On Thursday English

Professional Rugby Union Clubs claimed they had the players' support and it does appear that if it came to a straight choice the majority would go with Epruc provided the clubs produce the financial packages they claim will be available.

The RFU has the England team — the official version — but the interdependence of international rugby compares unfavourably in career terms with club rugby and the vast majority of First Division players do not play for England and so have no access to international pay-outs.

De Glanville made it clear that the clubs' fixture structure — a two-tier European competition supported by a 24-team Anglo-Welsh league and 12-team English Conference — would be preferable to the union's with its smaller European involvement and insistence on the intrusion of divisional rugby.

"We're not going to be publicly drawn on one side or the other. To have to choose between club and country is not a position we should ever be put in," de Glanville said. "What is very worrying for the players is that a lot of them have to make career decisions about next season and for them it's a nightmare scenario."

Supercharged Super-12, Previews, page 24



THREE FROM FIVE MUST GO

The relegation dog-fight

26

In Monday's 24-page sports section



What often happens is that when the gates open for the first time a new horse will get frightened, and when they're frightened they will start to kick a brick wall. That's what happened to me.

Search for a Master: Go to the first major of the season on Sunday night. Monday's paper will have reports from the Masters and Andy Farrell, plus a Masters Diary.

Agony on the Tyne: Can Newcastle make their return to the top of the league? Coverage of their game at home to Aston Villa on Sunday plus reports on all Saturday's Premiership matches. Plus reports on the key: Endersleigh, League games and the Auto Wind screens shield trial.

Getting the Fridge to work again: William "The Refrigerator" Perry comes out of retirement as the London Monarchs' kick off the 1996 World League season against the Scottish Claymores. Plus a report from America on the current glon hero whose career is threatened by a sex and drugs scandal.

In tomorrow's Independent on Sunday



Although he doesn't need the money, the world's most expensive footballer wants to become a manager. I want to manage in England and abroad, he said before pausing. And I want to manage England. David Platt talks to Ian Ridley about the status of Arsenal, English football, and his own career.

There have been faults on all sides but of the three parties involved, the RFU, the clubs and the players, the winners in chief are the clubs. Peter Wheeler says they are not Johnny Come Latelys trying to hijack the game, but that is exactly what they are. Charles Ross dissects the debate which has been tearing rugby union apart this week.

Andrew Barker examines the credentials of the man most likely to upset Stephen Hendry at the World Snooker Championship in Sheffield — John Higgins — while Andrew Farrell and Tim Glover report from the US Masters at Augusta.

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Too time: Sandy Lyle plays the fourth hole of yesterday's second round

Photograph: Stephen Munday/Allsport

Great White Shark casts large shadow over field

Golf

TIM GLOVER
reports from Augusta

When Bobby Jones, the moving spirit behind Augusta National, first set eyes on Jack Nicklaus he remarked that he played a game with which he was not familiar. There were many here echoing similar sentiments about Greg Norman following his blazing start in the 60th Masters. While the Great White Shark was basking in the warm glow of a record-equaling 63, lesser mortals were still in his wake.

Sam Torrance, the No 2 to Colin Montgomerie on the European Tour last year, and Gordon Sherry, the amateur champion, parted company from the tournament, and from each other, yesterday. Torrance, who had an 80 in the first round, needed a score of Norman proportions to survive the half-way cut and although he improved considerably with a 71, it was not enough.

At seven over par for the championship, Torrance headed for the airport. "Every cloud has a silver lining," Torrance said. "I'll be able to watch the tournament at home with my wife and kids." The 22-year-old Sherry added a 77 to a 78 for an aggregate of 155, 11 over par and the first thing he did after signing his score card was to sign a contract to turn professional.

"This was the worst experience of my life," Sherry said, "but in the long run I'm sure it will be of great benefit to me." He will make his debut as a professional

in the Italian Open and has received invitations to six other events. Unlike Torrance, Sherry intended to spend the weekend in Augusta but he was not sure whether he would watch the tournament at the course or on television. Fred Couples, who played with Sherry for two rounds here, said: "He should forget about the figures. He's a much better player than that and has a great future ahead of him."

Sherry finished two shots in front of the former Open champion Ian Baker-Finch, who had a 79 that included a quadruple-bogey nine at the 13th. Not surprisingly, the Australian, who languishes in Norman's shadow, refused to discuss his performance. He had shared a practice round here with Seve Ballesteros and the two compared notes. It might have had a resonance with the log of the captain of the Titanic. Baker-Finch is dying the death of a 1,000 missed cuts. There were a few players worse off than Baker-Finch. Doug Ford, for example, but Ford, the Masters champion in 1957, is 73 years of age.

Meanwhile, Norman appears to have taken a leaf out of the book of the Sri Lankan opener in his approach this year to the Masters. He has been a notoriously slow starter at Augusta National and traditionally reserves his best for a final-round charge. On Thursday his 63 matched the record set by Nick Price in the third round 10 years ago.

"I'll be able to reflect on this for many years to come," Norman said. But only if he wears the Green Jacket on Sunday

evening. The 41-year-old Norman, playing in his 16th Masters, failed to break par in the first round of seven of his previous nine appearances. His nine birdies from the seventh hole gave him a two-stroke lead over the left-hander Phil Mickelson and both had glorious back nines, coming home in 30, one short of the record achieved by Mark Calcuttawalla in 1992.

Norman, who has finished in the top six in the Masters on seven occasions, said: "You just try to keep the momentum going that's within you. I'm excited but I'm not going to let it get away from me." Norman has won the Open Championship twice but has never landed a major in the United States despite being the world No 1. No one has ever shot below 63 in any of the four majors and Norman is the only player to do it in two of them. His other 63 came in the second round of the 1986 Open at Turnberry.

Putting is the key to winning the Masters and Norman had only 27 putts in the first round, nine below regulation. "When you get into the kind of roll that I was in it feels very comfortable," he said. "Hey, let it happen. Let the reins of the horse go and let him run as fast he wants." In an attempt to pull in the reins, the tournament committee thought long and hard about the pin positions for the second round, yesterday. The speed of the greens and the placing of the flags are the only two defences the course has against a major assault. They will not want to see the Masters won with

an overwhelming score and, short of placing the flagsticks in the middle of the bunkers or lakes, they came up with some fiendish placements yesterday.

Some, including Tom Watson, would argue that the position of the flags in the first round was tricky enough. At the par-three 16th, David Gilford, in an otherwise exemplary round, had four putts and that was one fewer than Watson. He took a six at the hole in a round of 75, three over par, and yesterday he was making progress until he had a six at the 15th.

Corey Pavin also had a 75 in the first round but yesterday proved that, devilish pin positions or not, the course was eminently playable. Pavin shot 66 to move from three over to three under. The field is pared to 44 plus ties after the second round, those within 10 shots of the lead also making the cut. With a 67 or less, Norman would break Raymond Floyd's 36-hole tournament record of 13 under 131 set in 1976. Under the 10-shot rule players would have to score at least a four-under-par aggregate of 140 to make the cut and avoid a lost weekend.

60th US MASTERS (Augusta): Early second-round scores (US unless stated): 63 Norman (Aus), 65 Mickelson (US), 67 B. T. H. (US), 68 L. J. (US), 69 D. G. (US), 70 S. P. (US), 71 T. W. (US), 72 S. L. (US), 73 S. L. (US), 74 S. L. (US), 75 S. L. (US), 76 S. L. (US), 77 S. L. (US), 78 S. L. (US), 79 S. L. (US), 80 S. L. (US), 81 S. L. (US), 82 S. L. (US), 83 S. L. (US), 84 S. L. (US), 85 S. L. (US), 86 S. L. (US), 87 S. L. (US), 88 S. L. (US), 89 S. L. (US), 90 S. L. (US), 91 S. L. (US), 92 S. L. (US), 93 S. L. (US), 94 S. L. (US), 95 S. L. (US), 96 S. L. (US), 97 S. L. (US), 98 S. L. (US), 99 S. L. (US), 100 S. L. (US), 101 S. L. (US), 102 S. L. (US), 103 S. L. (US), 104 S. L. (US), 105 S. L. (US), 106 S. L. (US), 107 S. L. (US), 108 S. L. (US), 109 S. L. (US), 110 S. L. (US), 111 S. L. (US), 112 S. L. (US), 113 S. L. (US), 114 S. L. (US), 115 S. L. (US), 116 S. L. (US), 117 S. L. (US), 118 S. L. (US), 119 S. L. (US), 120 S. L. (US), 121 S. L. (US), 122 S. L. (US), 123 S. L. (US), 124 S. 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